

## **Stubborn Flocks**

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[Davesprite](#), [Auto-Responder](#) | [Lil Hal](#), [Dirk Strider](#), [Dave's Bro](#) | [Beta Dirk Strider](#), [Dirk's Bro](#) | [Alpha Dave Strider](#), [Dave Strider](#), [Kankri Vantas](#), [Nepeta Leijon](#), [Beta Guardians \(Homestuck\)](#), [Alpha Guardians](#), [Alpha Kids \(Homestuck\)](#), [Beta Kids \(Homestuck\)](#), [Beta Trolls \(Homestuck\)](#), [Alpha Trolls \(Homestuck\)](#)

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# Stubborn Flocks

by [09Pyros](#) [09Hydros](#)

## Summary

It's been nearly a few months since they both appeared in this new world. They have no idea on what happened but both former sprites are now on a very different Earth with very different but mostly familiar bodies, for two things Hal now has a body of his own somewhat and Davesprite is still part bird.

This new world is very different and strange to both, its set in the future and one important detail that shocked both was that in this world: Dave Strider, little brother to famous twins David 'D' Strider and Dereck 'Bro' Strider and a twin himself to Dirk Strider, died at the age of 12, 4 years ago. Now how does this fare for Davesprite now dubbed 'Qrow Davis' who looks almost exactly like the deceased Strider with him being the alternate version of said deceased Strider?

It was bad enough with monsters and enemies from the game popping up every once and a while, not to mention their unwilling and accidental involvement with the dark underworld. They've done their best avoiding anything that might cause them problems but one single mistake from Qrow has the ex-players and involvements from the game chasing after him. Especially the family of Striders who are convinced that he is their Dave.

## Notes

This idea pretty much popped into my head chatting with a friend of mine (cough cough TB THANKS cough cough). I decided to just write it out since it wouldn't leave my head which is hurting because I am currently sick and shit. I am bad at restraining myself from focusing on just one or two stories.

5 stories, including this one, I am juggling 5 stories with one I am

barely even thinking of.

I am a horrible writer with no restraint. I am sorry.

# A Rookie Move

## Chapter Summary

Davesprite, now Qrow Davis, makes a rookie move and starts incoming trouble for both him and his appointed adopted little brother who was a pair of sun glasses and now a mostly incomplete android, Lil Hal.

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Dirk had only wanted to pay respects to his dead twin on the day of his death, his friends joining him as well to pay their respects as well. His brothers and the others would visit later because they were busy. What they didn't expect was for his dead brother to be standing in front of his own grave.

## Chapter Notes

"Rookie Move"

~ Refers to a bad move that was taken.

~Or more specifically a very stupid fucking move.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Got anything?"

RA: Something.

RA: Since I have been plugged into his personal data structure and hacking into all of his files on this device, which is by the way unable to compare to my intellect and skills and superior technological advancements, it is pathetically easy to pull everything out in the open.

RA: I am once again disappointed over this mission.

"Yeah yeah I know, but we can't really owe a debt to the *Midnight Crew* of all people. I'd rather not have them hang the debt over us like a fucking piece of meat for starving animals and I refuse to handle it in any way

involving any more violence. I'm done with violence for the fucking moment. Fuck I'm done with violence for the whole fucking week. Deny any requests you get for two weeks or something, I'm taking a break from all of this shit."

RA: Understood.

RA: Also data download 100% complete, get me the fuck out of this disgusting pig sty. It's unethical and suddenly I don't mind giving all this information to the Midnight Psychos, this guys days are definitely numbered now.

"Gotcha."

RA: I mean seriously, this fucker is the worst one we're dealing with yet. You sure you can't just blow this guy off right now? He deserves it.

"I'm guessing this guys involved with the most disturbing and sickest shit yet?"

RA: Obviously.

"As much as tempting as that sounds, I'll leave him to the crew. They've been after this guy for a while now, its the whole reason why we're getting this stuff and giving it to crew. To have our debt paid full and due rather than wait for them to pull it out of nowhere and have us do something we'll both most likely regret."

RA: Fair point.

RA: Come on, lets just get out of here already.

"Alright let's go."

He gently curled his hand around the USB drive and tugged it free from the port, its small and square-shaped with bright red shades imprinted on both sides of its drive. The sign of his adopted little brother Hal, he sticks the USB into the hidden port on his watch and exited through the same way he entered the place.

The window and balcony.

He closed the window behind him as he stood on the balcony, he shivers. Not at the cold night air, he was mostly used to that, but at the feeling of his wings phasing through his clothing and originally separating from his skin. It always weirded him out and neither did he nor Hal figured out on how the fuck it was possible but just left it alone with the conclusion on more of Sburbs fuckery.

Hal assures him that no one can see him and he's leaping into the dead of night. He's flying high into the air and tugging at the scarf that's keeping his face warm and mostly hidden along with the face mask underneath, his red orange eyes protected with dark red goggles instead of his usual bright orange aviators.

The night is late and dark as there were many clouds in the sky and he uses them as cover as he flies over the big city, it would've been harder to hide at night without the clouds and there were already a few vague pictures of him in the internet but Hal took care of that as fast as he could but it was the internet so somewhere there was at least *one* copy of his dark figure with his wings out and in flight.

RA: Congratulations, another predictably successful mission for the Davis Duo.

He frowns at the name 'Davis' but does nothing else, it was his new name and that was that. He was only a little upset on how close it was to 'Dave' but it was a thing he put up with as his surname, his new first name being 'Grow'.

At first he had been ticked off at it but quickly mellowed out, he'd rather have Grow as his first name rather than Davis.

His wings occasionally flap as he practically rides the wind, his destination clear in mind and his internal clock and map telling him where to go.

He's skilled and used to flying more than walking or running, it had been an honest to god miracle that his legs even functioned and that he remembered

his how to control his lower mobility in the first place. He's decent at walking and running but not a master of it, flying on the other hand?

He's a fucking pro at that shit.

He's about 10 minutes, 28 seconds and 1.2 milliseconds away from home base when Hal brings up a subject he's nearly forgotten.

RA: Tomorrows the day you know.

RA: The day this world's Dave died. Want to finally pay your respects and visit the grave?

Davespr-Qrow doesn't falter in his flying, though his face pulls a deep frown.

After about 7 minutes of heavy thinking and hesitation...

"... Okay, tomorrow we'll go visit Dave's grave and pay our respects. We really should've done so earlier."

RA: Wait, really?

"As long as we go early and be quick about it, we're already risking it by going there on *that day*. You know they go there without fail every year tomorrow as well as my-Dave's birthday."

RA: It's still your birthday, and technically as well as mine and Dirk's birthday. We're twins in this world remember?

"I thought you were all up for separating us from them Hal but you're still younger than me, but I can see where you're going with this so no need to explain more on it."

RA: Aww.

RA: And here I was, readying my whole explanation and deep cognitive view on the matter.



"Exactly."

RA: You're no fun.

Qrow rolls his eyes and tucks his wings as their home base comes into full view, it's an abandoned computer factory that was a bit far from the city and near the mountains.

The inside looked better and mostly different from the outside as the windows slid open for his arrival, he swiftly goes through the opening and lands on the soft padding of the personally made landing pad as the window slides back shut above and behind him.

It was a lot worse when they first found it but with their combined efforts they transformed it into a suitable place for them to live for the time being though they were considering to make it permanent but you never know. There were other places that both he and Hal kept their eye on just in case they needed to make a second base or another emergency place.

They already had one but it was only one and its position was already risky.

It was mostly Qrow that did a lot of the work but he did it on Hal's careful instructions and underneath his supervision.

"I'm back."

"Welcome back."

Qrow nods towards Hal as he enters their 'living room', it could be considered as such. There was a comfy but old couch and it had a flat screen tv that Hal fixed.

Hal waves his only hand in greeting even though they had just spoken earlier.

While Qrow had regained full human body with extra and some replaced bird parts, Hal on the other hand?

Well, he had his own body now but it was... incomplete. He was mostly torso and had only one hand at the moment. And that were the organic parts of him beside most of his head. He was an incomplete android with his torso and head in a combination of metal and flesh while his hand was mostly organic with the exception of his shoulders and metallic elbow and fingers.

Around Hals neck and back of his lower head were ports and USBs as well as one plugged in wire that wasn't really plugged into anything at the moment, Hal could literally take a piece of himself and have it so far away yet still function in multiple places at once though his focus shifts with every USB taken from him.

Hal has strawberry blonde hair and two metallic sharp fin-like things coming from his skull and his pointy shades were practically welded unto his young face. Hal still looks like 13 years old seeing how he was made by 13 year old Dirk much to the not reall A.I.'s irate disappointment.

"Here you go buddy." Qrow says as he gets one of Hal's USB from his watch and gently sticks it back into Hal who shudders and sighs, shades lighting up before dimming back down to their usual glow.

Hal hums as he turns in his modified chair, Qrow steps back a bit to unwrap the scarf from his person along with the thick winter coat and switch his red goggles to his usual orange aviator shades. His usual shades that were once black and turned bright orange after prototyping himself with SeppuCrow were now a dark orange and he didn't really mind them anymore.

More used to them being colored orange anyway.

Qrow shivers once more as he feels his wings meld back into his skin and phase once again through his clothing, turning into bright orange tattoo marks on his back that depicted his wings.

Once again, don't know how, why or what. They just don't care about it anymore. It just made things convenient to hide them from the public.

He needs to get more used to having his wings turn into tattoo marks, its uncomfortable but he's getting to the point where he's mostly fine with it for at least half the day before needing to let his wings out and fly for a bit.

Good progress over the couple of months they were staying here.

Qrow rolls his shoulders and sits beside Hal as his adopted little brother mentally goes through the USB, he hands Hal two other external USB that weren't initially part of him when he asks for them. Hal was going to transfer them to the two USB drives, one to give to the Midnight Crew and one to keep from his own internal banks.

He didn't like the files on it but could see the potential blackmail should the Midnight Crew decide to not 'deal' with the guy personally, 'dealing' as in murdering the heck out of the guy.

"You need to power down and sleep, you've been awake long enough bro." Qrow says bluntly as Hal finishes quickly, Hal opens his mouth to protest but closes it and nods reluctantly. His physical body was pretty tired now so he had no choice. Though he was mostly metallic he was still a fleshy organism that needed to consume and rest every once in a while.

Hal grumbles as Qrow lifts him up from the chair and clings to the older male as he exits the living room and their mostly shared bedroom. Qrow mostly uses it as Hal usually keeps himself busy and awake on most nights he wasn't tired by working, it was hard to work with one hand and limited mobility but Hal made it work. Besides the fruit of his hard work was just within his reaches, he was building himself the rest of his body.

Qrow helped him in what he could do, though Hal was adamant in doing the project himself most of the time. Currently he was working on his other arm, it was half-way done at the moment. It was hard to work on it with the limited supplies they had, not to mention the run-down technology Hal had to modify and tweak or completely transform.

Both former Strider-sprites tuck into Qrows bed-nest, unfortunately certain avian tendencies stayed with Qrow like his wings when they awoke in the

first place. One being his preferred resting place, turning beds into nests to suit his avian needs much to his irritation.

"We really going to his grave tomorrow?" Hal asks as he stares at the ceiling "I didn't expect that answer, well I did but it was the small 3.2% chance in the 96.8% chance of your absolute denial. It threw me off honestly." he turns his head to look at him "Why?"

Qrow stayed silent as he settled into his side of the nest and stared into Hals shades before silently shrugging, the android deadpanned before rolling the digital equivalent of his eyes.

Both stayed silent for a moment before Hal turns back towards the ceiling.

"Goodnight Qrow."

"Night Hal."

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Dirk is a Strider.

That was obvious given to the fact he was the younger brother of the famous Strider twins. His older brothers.

There was David 'D' Strider, the eldest of them all and older twin by a mere 6 minutes and 12 seconds. He was a famous movie director and writer.

Then there was Dereck 'Bro' Strider, the second eldest and younger twin. He was a famous DJ and rapper, not to mention his mostly secret running of various porn websites that held questionable things.

Dirk was now the youngest Strider, now being a keyword. He wasn't always the youngest. He had a twin to. Had being another keyword.

Turns out Striders almost always came in pairs. A fact mostly proven by their cousins the Lalondes, the two other famous adult sisters who were part

Strider in genes and were twins themselves, Roxanne and Rosanna Lalonde.

Anyway, he wasn't always the youngest and he had a twin. That twin was Dave Strider his younger brother by 4 minutes and 13 seconds who looked so much like D just as Dirk looked so much like Bro, genetics were weird like that.

Dave Strider is dead.

He has been for 4 years straight now, his little twin brother has been dead for 4 years and no one really knew why, how and when exactly he died.

Dave disappeared for 11 days before they found his corpse in an old factory, somewhere in those 10 days Dave died being stabbed through his chest and stomach as well as being shot multiple times by bullets.

The authorities all suspected that the mafia was involved but why? Why Dave? Dave didn't have connection to the mafia, they all knew that! He had been a young pre-teen looking towards the future in following his older brothers footsteps, both brothers footsteps in fact. He had wanted to be a DJ like Bro and make shitty comics like D's shitty series of Sweet Bro and Hella Jeff that somehow everyone enjoyed.

So why did Dave die so young? He didn't deserve to die so why?

It was a question everyone asked after they found out he was dead.

No one knew the answer.

Not even Dirk and Bro who were geniuses and had been trying to find out why for the past 4 years. All three Striders raked through whatever they could in trying to find out why Dave died and who killed him, they would make the fucker/s pay.

Unfortunately they found nothing, nada, zilch. Absolutely nothing.

They even suspected the Midnight Crew of the Felt! But after a quick hack they found nothing about Dave from both of the most notorious crime

gangs in the city, possible America too.

They had been devastated, not even their cool ironic and stoic facades could hide their sadness. Things almost fell apart for the three, their brotherly bond nearly breaking without their fourth member who they missed so much.

But they were Striders. And Striders stick together no matter what, and their friends helped them get better even though they were just as devastated as they were.

Which led to today.

Today was the eleventh day of Dave's sudden disappearance and the day the authorities found his corpse in a goddamn abandoned factory. They all decided that on that day they would all visit Dave's grave, they did all come here twice a year. On today and on Dave and Dirk's birthday. No matter what, they would all come here at some point of the day before the day ended.

Dirk decided to go early, his friends Jake, Roxy, Jane, and John. The adults along with the Rose and Jade would be a little late seeing as they had something else left to do that couldn't really wait but they promised that they would come eventually. They never skipped this day.

"Thanks for coming with me guys... I really appreciate it." Dirk tells them quietly, he smiles at Jake who pats his shoulder comfortingly.

"Dirky, no matter what. We got your back dude!" Roxy declared with a bright grin, though they could all see the hidden sadness underneath it.

Jane smiles at him "Of course Dirk, besides Dave was our friend too. We miss him very much." she sighs sadly and smiles at John as he rubs at her back like the great big brother he was.

"Yeah, we all miss Dave Dirk. No way we're going to let you go alone and be all moody on your own!" John exclaims with a happy and sad smile, Dirk unironically loves his friends. They were all such sentimental dorks

and shit, he hates to wonder what would happen if they hadn't had his back from the start.

Jake grins at him "Now we wouldn't want that now would we? You... Who the dickens is that?" Jake suddenly asks with narrowed eyes as he looks straight forward, the others following his line of sight. They were already so close to Dave's grave.

Sure enough there was someone in front of Dave's grave, kneeling and touching the tombstone. He, supposing they were a he, was wearing a dark red orange hoodie with the hood up and dark blue jeans and red sneakers.

Dirk narrowed his eyes as he felt a surge of anger, how dare this random person touch his brothers grave?!

He quickly walked forward, his friends following him hastily. The stranger didn't seem to notice the incoming footsteps, unnaturally focusing on something but they didn't know what.

Soon enough Dirk was beside the stranger and grabbed hold of his hand that was tracing Dave's date of birth to his date of recorded death. The stranger jolts at the gesture and tensed as Dirk pulled him up, the hood falling off as Dirk started.

"Hey! What the fuck do you think you're... doing..." Dirk loses his anger and he's breathless, his friends behind him gasp as the mysterious stranger's face is revealed.

*No fucking way.*

Blonde hair swept and styled so familiarly.

*It was impossible.*

The same cheek bones, chin, nose, eyebrows *and ears*. His eyebrows were above clear and high on his forehead displaying surprise.

*What the fuck.*

A pair of familiar yet different shades laid on his face, dark orange but aside from the color it was an *exact replica of a certain pair of aviators that Dirk had tucked away in his room after getting it back. The same exact aviators that John and D had bought as a birthday gift.*

John broke the awkward and very tense silence, a broken whisper.

"Dave...?"

Lo and behold, Dave motherfucking Strider stood before them all, wearing a pair of different colored shades that looked like the original black ones Dave and D wore. At least, they think it's Dave. They don't know until the shades slide down a bit and his eyes are *red, red just like Dave's and that is Dave for fucks sake!!*

Dave looks startled and surprised, he yanks his hand from Dirk's very loosened grip and coughs before pushing his aviators back up to hide his red red eyes.

"Sorry dudes, wrong guy."

He is *definitely Dave*, they recognize that voice even though it changed a bit because puberty duh but that is *definitely Dave Strider what the fuck was he saying?!?*

Dave looks uncomfortable and shuffles back "Again sorry, I think you got the wrong guy. I'm not this 'Dave' guy, anyway, sorry for touching his tombstone I guess? Yeah, sorry for that." he mumbles awkwardly.

They're still in a stupor, they don't know how to react.

Dave rubs at his neck before pocketing his hands "Anyway I have to go, my condolences to 'Dave' guy or whatever. Bye." he turns quickly and starts to jog away.

That snaps Dirk out of it first, heart pounding painfully in his chest.

"Wait! Dave, fuck!" He's running now, they both are and soon enough the rest of them are running too.



"Davey! Come back for fucks sake! Dave fucking Strider, wait! Hold on!"

"Dave Strider you come back here right this instant!"

"Jumping jehoshaphats! I don't know what the devil is going on but Dave Strider you better stop running right now!"

"Dave stop running! What is going on?! Dave slow down! C'mon!"

But Dave doesn't stop or slow down, if anything he speeds up. They chase them down the cemetery road, passing many graves and tombstones as they do. Dirk is nearing Dave, within arms reach and Dirk's heart and mind are roaring as Dirk has his hand out ready to grab at Dave's hoodie with gritted teeth.

Until Dave makes a sharp left turn and starts running off the graveyards road, narrowly dodging graves left and right. Dirk curses and skids to a halt before following, they're all still pursuing Dave who seems adamant in running away for whatever reason and its starting to kill Dirk who's starting to wonder why and how and what but he shoves those thoughts away and focuses on Dave, Dave, Dave.

His dead brother was alive and that was all that matters, that and catching him too.

Dave is nearing the cemetery's metal fence posts that were tall enough to stop him and they're sure that he's going to slow down but are shocked to see Dave use a sturdy gravestone to vault himself over the post and land professionally on the other side before continuing his run.

Dirk's too late to use a grave to vault and slams into the fence post, he cries out in pain from the impact and he watches with despair as Dave disappears into a nearby alley. The elder twin growls and slams his fists unto the metal posts and lets out a frustrated and sad scream.

"*Dammit!!*"

The others arrive shortly, panting as Dirk pants and grips against the metal posts.

"Can... someone *please*... tell me I'm not imagining everything... that just happened," gasps John as he slumps to the ground "we just... chased Dave fucking Strider, who's *alive* and *not dead*, who then did an acrobatic pirouette of *that* tombstone and ran away..."

Jane shook her head, palm pressing against her chest "No brother mine... you didn't imagine that... we all saw it." she pants as she leans against Roxy who helps supports her before looking towards Dirk in concern.

"Yo Distri..... you doing okay over there?"

Jake lays a hand on Dirk's shoulder "You alright there Dirk?"

Dirk clenched his fists before turning to look at everyone, taking off his shades even and says with determined bright orange eyes "We're getting the others and telling them what the fuck just happened. Come on guys." he motions and stands up, helping up Jane and John before moving briskly through the cemetery.

He grabs for his phone and types in his Bro's number.

"*Sup lil dude?*"

"Bro? *Something just fucking happened down in the cemetery...*"

---

Qrow panted as he slouched against the buildings side, his wings were out as he went over towards a certain side and peeked over the edge towards the nearby cemetery. He sees the faint figures of Dirk and the others leaving from the metal fencing.

"The *fuck* just happened Hal."

His glasses lit up as Hal replies.

RA: It seems that you have made a rookie move in not paying attention to your surroundings thus getting ambushed by Dirk and the others who seem to have come earlier than expected.

"What about you then?! Couldn't you have warned me?!"

RA: Unfortunately the cemetery is quite old school have no security cameras that I can hack into and the buildings around us do not have any outdoor security feed. That and I was a bit busy getting a call from Spades Slick.

*"Uuugh what the fuck now???"*

RA: He wants to meet with you pronto. Asap. Right away.

RA: He says it's important.

"Couldn't this wait until tomorrow or like later this after fucking noon."

RA: Unfortunately no, at least we can give him the hard drive earlier than expected.

*"Fine. Anything to get this whole shit out of mind for now... What the fuck do we do about this!??"*

RA: I

RA: Do not know.

RA: Hope that you don't pull any more rookie moves?

*"Ha ha ha. You're motherfucking hilarious Hal."*

RA: You know it.

RA: But in all seriousness, I have no actual idea on how to deal with this.

RA: My superior mind may be above human intelligence, it is not as sharp as it used to be when I was a pair of glasses.

RA: Being part human has truly brought me down from my pinnacle of intellect but I will not complain, this is much better than being a pair of fucking shades.

"... Alright, fine. Fuck. We'll deal with this later. First: we deal with Slick and the Midnight Crew, second: we go get something to eat because I'm fucking starving. Want anything specific?"

RA: Wendy's.

"Fair enough."

Qrow sighs as he jumps over the edge after making sure no one could see him, he uses his wings to glide down before shivering as they turned back into tattoos.

He pulls the hood over his head and keeps his head low and heads towards the coordinates Hal sent him.

He would deal with the previous bullshit later, he doesn't want to owe a debt to the Midnight Crew any longer at the moment.

In retrospect he should've dealt with it last with all the fucking shenanigan bullshit that happens soon afterwards.

---

Derack 'Bro' Strider fucking *slams* into the room, looking disheveled and shocked and somewhat angry as D stares at him from his place on the couch.

"Dereck, what the fuck man."

Dereck looks at him straight in the eye and deadpans in complete seriousness.

"Dave's alive."

D freezes and his expensive laptop falls to the floor, but doesn't break that's good, and he looks at Bro with disbelieving eyes.

"*What.*"

## Chapter End Notes

Here ya go! Hope you enjoyed :)

# Unbelievable Luck

## Chapter Notes

Next chapter incoming :D!

On other news:

HAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH \*ahem\* sorry, got a bit excited there XD

Check this out! One chapter in and I got Fan Art! Also very **first Fan Art** here!!!

THANK YOU SO MUCH TOPPIS YOU BEAUTIFUL ARTIST YOU

<https://toppis.tumblr.com/post/165504207521/qrow-davis>

Qrow looks amazing! <3<3<3<3

I'm being so dorky about this but it's seriously awesome <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

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## ==>Months in the Past

### *What the fuck*

He darts in the shadows as best as he could with the added weight in his arms, said weight clinging to his person like a fucking one-armed koala but he doesn't mind. Not one bit, no. They're in this together, they're in this whole shit together whether they like it or not and like hell he was going to let the other alone in the state he was in. Nope, not going to happen.

"Fuck fuck fuck fuck." He's panting, he's tired and his arms are *heavy* and his *legs* (*legs, an actual pair of legs and feet and not a fucking spectral tail. How the fuck. He had legs again, holy shit what. How the fuck was he walking, running, why, shit holy fuck*) were so unnaturally fucking **numb**, dammit... but he goes on, he goes on for the sake of himself and for Hal who's scared in his not-so artificial life.

His wings were gone but they still felt like they were there for some reason, right there underneath his shoulderblades they tingled as if they were still *there*, he doesn't know but his back is *killing* him even without Hal in his arms. His legs, he could barely feel them over the sense of tiring numbness that had him nearly stumbling and falling every 15-20 steps.

*Gog fucking damn it*

They're cold, hungry, tired as ***fuck*** and for some reason covered in blood. Well, Davesprite was at least.

Or, is it just Dave now? He's no longer a sprite but at the same time he felt like one? Fuck if he knows. But now's not the time for that whole shit, he needs to find somewhere safe for the both of them. Somewhere they could pass out in peace. Where they could stay for a bit and figure shit out.

*This is just fucking wonderful, fuck... Fuck...*

They don't know where the fuck they are, they're somewhere near a city and it's night time. The city looms them in the near distance as Davesprite darts in the shadows, looking around frantically.

He's lost his chill, he *can't* chill and shit as hunger and exhaustion gnaws at both him and Hal. They can't remember what happened. They've only woken up hours ago in the forests near some factory or some shit.

"...bro..." Hal lets out weakly and Davesprite bites his lip as he looks at Hal in his arms, he's tired and hungry, possibly even more so than Davesprite and there's an empty battery sign that's flashing on Hal's shades, it flashes lowly enough that it can be hidden when Hal buries his head in Davesprite's chest.

*Fuck fuck fuck, why the fuck is this happening*

"Don't worry bro, I got ya." He grunts as he tightens his grip on the physically smaller teen, he's got him, he's got this.

He ignores the dark spots that are growing in his vision, his shades are off and tucked safely on the collar of Hal's black tank top shirt, hanging in there. He ignores the growing tiredness in his arms and the ache of his stomach and back. He ignores the numbness of his legs and concentrates on getting them to safety.

He avoids all signs of people, they wouldn't understand and they'd freak out over Hal who was missing limbs and part fucking metal. They'd lock him up and dissect him, possible even Davesprite if the weird feeling of being sprite and human and not fucking sprite went by.

He ducks into the shadows, gradually making his way to some lower point in town where there was less light and more alleyways and gradually buildings looked more and more as if they were abandoned.

*Come on, come on come on come on*

"...dude, you're... bleeding..." Hal points out, he is. His chest is bleeding in one exact and certain spot, the one where his cheap piece of shit katana used to be before when he was a sprite that fused with Seppucrow sprite, but its not bleeding very much. Though he's got other wounds but they're not bleeding thankfully, that one spot on his chest is though but that's okay.

It's not painful and if its not painful he can focus on other shit. Like finding them somewhere to recover in peace, and medical supplies, you can never go wrong with that.

"Shut up, I'm fine. We can worry about that shit later, right now we have to get out of here and find somewhere safe." Davesprite insists stubbornly.

*I don't know what the fuck is going on but we're going to fucking survive this shit and everything's going to make sense and be fine.*

Hal makes a low noise that has Davesprite shooshing at him, he needs to save his energy and not die. Dying bad, dying very fucking bad.

Seeing a Bro like this, no matter what even if it was an artificial alternate and younger version of Bro, felt so wrong. That and Hal seemed just like a



kid right now, a tired, beaten up and exhaustively hungry kid that's about to fucking *die*.

*Not on my motherfucking watch.*

He's seen Bro die twice, like hell he's going to have Bro, young or not, die on him a third fucking time.

He's gone far enough, his sights zone in to an abandoned warehouse and his instincts are tingling. He listens to them and looks around, no one in sight.

Perfect.

He breaks through the back door, it's filled with shit but that's not what matters right now. He's gathering shit together, anything soft to put Hal on and there's a pile of clothes and he makes a crude nest out of it as well as other shit that he doesn't really remember but he's not focused on that.

He's focused on getting Hal some warmth and something to eat as well as patch any wounds that he might have. The warehouse is well stocked with items despite looking very abandoned from an outsiders point of view. There's a niggling feeling at the back of his neck but right now he's feeding Hal some random rations he found in stock.

It's not much and probably tastes dry as fuck, which he confirmed when he took a bite himself, but it would do for now. He even manages to find some bottles of water for both of them, the fuck is with his warehouse? It even has a medical kits stashed around in the crates and shit!

Fuck it, they need it right now.

He's sluggish in checking for wounds and tired as hell, Hal's officially passed out but not dead and Davesprite is right behind him. He's messily cleaning his wounds, dressing them both to the best of his current ability and decides he's not going to die if he passes out at the moment.

He manages to crawl back to Hal, his entire body screaming at him and he covers them both with black jackets as makeshift blankets and use fedoras

as makeshift pillows.

He's just passing out when he sees a figure in white appearing in his blurry vision, a feminine gasp echoing in the now very messy warehouse. He doesn't really care, too exhausted to deal with it.

A clear mistake when he wakes up later on but right now he's content in the crude nest he's made and with Hal safe in his passed out and tired arms. They'll be fine.

---

RA: Dude, are you even paying attention.

RA: Bro, I do not think now is the correct time to be going down memory lane. You are clearly going down memory lane.

RA: Stop it.

Qrow blinks and shakes his head, adjusting the red goggles as he did "Yeah yeah, I got it." he mumbles back. Frowning as he rubbed at his chest, underneath his clothes were lasting scars that he's grown used to now. They were different from the old scars he had back then, he couldn't find any old scars caused by Bro and that disturbed him at first.

He got over it, (~~not really~~) and got used to the new scars that marred his skin instead. Like the scar that was obviously made when he turned into a sprite, merging with Seppucrowsprite and had that cheap piece of shit stabbed right through his chest. He doesn't remember where it was, it got lost during the fight with Noir with his... Bro.

He ignored the sudden flashing images of his older brother's corpse ran through his very own sword, dude didn't deserve to die like that. He was an asshole but he didn't deserve to have his own sword rammed right through his own heart.

It honestly stung a bit, seeing and hearing about Derrick 'Bro' Strider. That man was not *his* Bro but at the same time, he kind of was? It was a similar sense on how Hal and Dirk were his Bro even though they kinda weren't. Damn Sburb and Paradox space and all its paradoxical sliminess and down right game shit-fuckery.

Everything's so gog damn confusing whenever it comes to genetics and family and other shit that the game got its grubby ass mitts all over at.

Anyway, Qrow grunted as he tugged on the hood that covered his hair. He probably should've gone with his scarf too but it would be quite suspicious with the temperature already so hot, besides he didn't really needed it. He only uses it when flying at night anyway.

RA: I found the place, it's near here.

"Good, where is it exactly?"

RA: You're not going to like this.

"... Spill the beans Hal, I'm having a bad day as it is. What could make it worst at the moment?"

RA: Alright alright.

RA: They're waiting in the nearest building on your left, the nearest Derse Resto-bar. They've got a booth reserved for us and them.

RA: As predicted the bar has quite the history and seen some serious shit but won't or will say anything for pretty penny. Predictable meeting place, no matter what version of the Midnights certain things will follow them no matter what universe. Once a dersite, always a dersite. Human or not.

"That wasn't so bad now was it?"

RA: What you aren't going to like is their neighbors.

Qrow stared at the street at his left, he could clearly see it. Derse Resto-bar in deep purple with hints of violet and dark shades of the same color. It

looked sophisticated, a proper restaurant/bar to the normal ignorant eye if a bit intimidating for its color scheme and what not.

But to people like him, they knew that this place was not a regular resto-bar. Derse would always be involved with something shady, the name Derse was scattered all over the place in this world and no matter what it always involved with something particularly shady.

This wasn't the only place that was under the name of Derse, he found a couple of other joints as well and yes in someway and somehow each joint was involved or connected to something shady.

That was something he knew, something he and Hal learned quickly in this world just like a whole bunch of other shit they had to learn of so he wasn't surprised. What got him staring was the fact that *this* particular resto-bar was just another store *away* from a certain business as well as practically *right beside* another certain business.

*Bunp N Rump.*

A club that everyone knew of, popular as fuck and over all one of the most famous day and night clubs to exist besides its sibling clubs '*Turn Hella*' and '*Tech Bro*'. Reason? All three clubs were mostly owned by the Strider brothers, specifically one Dereck Strider who often visited each club personally to do some sick ass beats and mixes. He mostly does shit in '*Tech Bro*', supposedly his favorite but will do jigs at '*Turn Hella*' as well as '*Bunp N Rump*'.

"Of fucking *course*."

And it wasn't just that.

A couple of meters beside Derse resto-bar was a familiar looking joke shop, *and it was pretty fucking obvious on who owned that shit.*

Yup. *Sasscre's Joking Emporium* just *happens* to be in the same fucking street at *Derse Resto-bar* and *Bunp N Rump*. The shop was obviously owned by John's dad, and there were only two Sasscre shops in the city and

town *and here was one of them*. There's a pretty good fucking chance that *John's Father was there*. He certainly didn't see Dadbert with John back at the graveyard but there was a fucking high chance there.

RA: Told you.

"Shut the *fuck up* Hal."

RA: Nah.

RA: Anyway, you need to get going.

RA: Spades is there and he isn't one of the most patient people out there remember. Go now and there's a chance you won't get stabbed the moment you show up.

RA: No promises though.

Qrow scoffed "As if I'd let the fucker stab *me*. He's only done it once before and *this **wasn't** the version that did it.*" he mutters darkly as his stomach ached as the phantom pain came back to haunt him once more. Yeah, he never really got over that. He's wary around *any* version of Jack Noir, every version of Jack slash Spades Slick will always be stab happy.

He was only glad this Noir slash Spades didn't have access to godly powers and omnipotence, but then again the thought of killing him crossed his mind every now and then and he had no qualms in the thought of making that thought into a reality. However, he'll let Slick live *for now*.

That fucker tries anything against him and *gogforbid anyone he cares about like **Hal***. Powers or no powers or whatever the fuck, that shithead is *dead* the moment *before* he even tries anything. Time travel or no, he's dead beforehand.

RA: ...

RA: My apologies bro.

RA: I didn't mean to

Qrow sighed and shook his head stiffly. "It's fine Hal. Now status on the two buildings?"

RA: Right. Hold on for a moment.

RA: ... ☹ ...

RA: The club is closed and thankfully no one is there but the janitors and maintenance. Very rough night before, Dereck made a surprise visit for a late night jig and things obviously got hectic.

RA: The Emporium is somewhat similar, seems like a slow day. Luckily Dadbert is no where in sight. You're in the clear.

Qrow smirked "Good." Finally he's moving forward, heading towards the resto-bar for the intended meeting. He gets there easily with no hitch, he keeps his head tilted downwards even as he enters the bar.

An old man is there right behind the counter, hair white from his scalp to his eyebrows and mustache. The elder doesn't even pause from cleaning the counter and just nods at Qrow who returns it stiffly, he's warily eyeing the old man as to the normal eye they would have thought of nothing from the elderly man but Qrow could see the faint scars peeking up his collar and sense the hidden dangerous aura the man exuded.

"Hey kid!"

Qrow's focus shifts from the suspicious elderly male to a man shorter than him that was dressed entire in black. Qrow wasn't the tallest asshole out there, he was a proud 5'8 thank you but this guy? This little man was about 5'2, possibly 5'3 but he can't estimate properly with the black fedora on his head.

"Clubs Deuce." Qrow grunted in greeting, the smaller male grins up to him tilting his fedora in greeting. Deuce was a short and rather baby-faced man, chubby to others maybe but no matter what his appearance and personality say there was a reason he was one of the Midnight Crew's *Card Quartet*. Qrow could already spot the weapons the smaller male had on him, not to

mention the possible amount of weapons in the other's sylladex. Clubs Deuce is a wild card, unpredictable half of the time and has a major amount of luck.

Deuce has very dark brown hair and light brown eyes, there's laughter lines already forming on his face. He's wearing the standard rule of 'black everything dammit', the complete set of black suit, hat, shoes, tie, fucking hell he's got a *black handkerchief* on him. On the front pocket of his suit is his card sign, clubs in light grey that stood out on the black.

Deuce hummed and turned to the elderly man, "Boxcar's ordering another round Mr. Walter! Slick wants another glass of whiskey and Droog's just fine for now. Me too! I'm fine for now Mr. Walter." he says quickly being upbeat like always. 'Walter' just nods and moves around behind the bar counter, shuffling and starting to fulfill the orders.

Qrow takes a quick glance around, it's nearly empty save for the supposedly 'passed out' looking dude in one of the booths, he could see the guy hunched over but at this angle Qrow can't tell if the guy was knocked out or dead. Which was a big possibility because again, Derse.

"Hey kid! Come on! Follow me, our booths 're at the back. Slick's getting real impatient waiting!" Deuce says cheerfully, Qrow stayed silent but moved forward. Deuce grinned and started to move but stopped for just a moment "Oh yeah, thanks again Mr. Walter! Here!" the plump male takes a wad of cash from his pocket and leaves it on the counter "For our bill, thanks again kind sir!" he then scrambles to catch up with Qrow who was waiting ahead for him.

The elderly man looks at the wad of cash before taking it not a moment after and gets back to work, a strange look in his eyes as he glances at the back of both Deuce and Qrow.

Qrow follows Clubs Deuce deeper into the resto-bar, it's kinda bigger than it looks than the outside. Doesn't really matter though as he follows, passing many empty booths along the way. Some had suspicious looks stains and marks in them and others looked brand new and very suspiciously clean.

Quickly Qrow takes everything in, noting possible exits and various plans are made in his head as Hal talks to him through the goggles.

RA: This should be quick, hopefully it is.

RA: Be careful bro.

"Not gonna wish me any luck? I'm hurt." he mutters lowly enough so Deuce didn't hear him from ahead where he was taking the lead.

RA: Nah

RA: You don't need luck, you're my brother as well as a former Strider.

RA: Striders don't really need luck and once a Strider, always a Strider.

RA: 🙄

Qrow rolled his eyes underneath the goggles, a smirk on his face at the emote Hal sent him. The intelligent nerd.

Soon though his smirk is kicked off his face and replaced with a flat emotionless poker face at the sight of the other members of the Midnight Crew's Card Quartet.

Deuce is already settled back in his original seat, on the far end of the table and pats at his side as a motion for Qrow to sit there. Across him is Diamonds Droog and Spades Slick, Hearts Boxcars was in a booth behind Deuce and him with an empty plate.

Droog smirks at him as Slick scowls at him. Qrow would love to scowl back, or even sneer but things needed to be seriously professional right now so he keeps his emotionless mask on.

Droog is thankfully the first to say anything, "Welcome Qrow Davis..."

---



"What do you *mean* Dave's *alive*? We've seen his fucking corpse Bro, Dave is six feet under." D coldly points out, standing now in front of the couch and facing his younger twin. His face cold and furious because *how dare Bro say that when it was the day their youngest brother was found **dead dead Dead**, dead as in capital D, E, A, D. DEAD.*

Bro scowls at him, both pretty much the same height. "That's not what *Dirk* says D, he says he's fucking *alive*." he responds just as cold and furious but there was a silent pained something in there, hollow and painful. Dave was *his* favorite younger brother just as Dirk was D's favorite. Bro was the closest to Dave besides Dirk and it had *hurt so fucking much* to find out he was dead years ago.

D is taken back, "*Dirk* said that? ... Still impossible, there's no fucking way man. We saw the corpse, saw the wounds, *no one* could ever survive that kind of shit and we were proven that the body was Dave's. We were there for his fucking *funeral* Dereck." his breath is shaky and his fists are clenched tight.

Bro sneers and lifts his phone at him "Then tell that shit to *Dirk*." the phone is on, the call Bro got was still going it seems.

"... Bro." Dirk.

D narrows his eyes and snatches Bro's phone and puts it on loudspeaker "What the fuck *Dirk*." he asks and gets bombarded by his little brother about how Dave was alive and how he was out there but for some reason not with them and that all sounds super fucking crazy.

He tell this to Dirk who scoffs at him.

"I'm telling you Dave is alive. A fucking asshole for not coming back to us but fucking alive dude. I promise I'm being super fucking serious here, you know I wouldn't joke about this kind of shit whenever it came to Dave."

Dirk hisses at him through the phone and both twins glance at each other. They could hear the hidden hysteria and desperation, the utter confidence in his words and the underlying pain with it.

"I... this makes *no* fucking sense, there was *evidence--*"

"Please bro... please... You gotta believe me, Dave is out there and something's wrong with him. I, fuck, he ran away from me at the graveyard. He was standing in front of his own fucking grave! He said bullshit on how he wasn't Dave when he clearly fucking was! He says he's not Dave but I know it's him, I an feel it. He's Dave, his my twin brother..."

Again the elder pair of twins glanced at each other, unsure and at loss on what to do. Dirk sounded so... sure and sad and *hurt*....

They're still not sure but... fuck it.

"Alright... fuck it, yeah okay. Say it was him, what are we going to do about it?" Bro speaks up, trying and failing to crush the small spark of unbelievable hope on the fact Dave *might* be alive and... shit.

"Isn't obvious? We're going to find that asshole. We're going to find Dave and bring him home."

D sighs, "We're doing this?"

"Yes, hell yes. We are doing this. We are making this happen."

---

**"Fuck."**

Wide red eyes that were filled with shock stared into equally shocked and wide blue eyes.

Qrow Davis sat slightly hunched as he panted lightly against the dumpster and underneath the adult male, his right cheek and left side of his neck cut and bleeding and his goggles were around his neck as he stared into the blue eyes of the father of his former best friend. The USB stick nearly drops from his grip as the adult speaks.

James Egbert stood straight above the teen, his hat is on the counter inside the shop as he had garbage bags in one hand and the other keeping the back door to his jokeshop open and he stares into the red eyes of the presumably *dead* teenage best friend of his son. His pipe falls from his lips as he speaks in his shock.

*"Dave Strider...?"*

Qrow opens his mouth to deny that name but snaps shut as he hears the scream of frustration from a certain Spades Slick and he's instantly pushing the elder Egbert back into his jokeshop and shutting its backdoor behind him with his back too it.

They hear the muffled bang and shout as Spades Slick kicks open the backdoor of Derse's restobar. Qrow thinks a mile a minute as he pressed his ear against the door, his eyes flickering to the stunned adult on the floor and back towards the door listening intently to the noise outside.

He thinks one thing as his goggles buzz slightly and he knows Hal is talking to him rapidly about everything.

*'This is unbelievable fucking luck that I'm having today, like seriously what the hell!?'*

He thinks back to minutes ago.

Chapter End Notes

AAAND CHAPTER 2 IS DONE :D

Thanks for all the support you guys, it's awesome! And thanks again to Toppis for the beautiful first fan art :3, I honestly have it as my screen saver in my iPad X3.

I hope you enjoyed! Till next time! :]

# Trouble

## Chapter Notes

:DDDDDD

Next chapter incoming!!

I love you guys, like, seriously X) hehehehe.

On other news:

**OIAINFPIHUYOGNF YOU ARE ALL AMAZING AND  
EVERYTHING IS WONDERFUL I THANK NIRA AND AGAIN  
TO TOPPIS BECAUSE I NOW HAVE TWO WONDERFUL  
PIECES OF FAN ART AND I JUST APHGEHAFDUJ**

<https://hichigoloves112.deviantart.com/art/Naptime-707126244>

This is so FUCKING CUTE AND AMAZING AND I JUST <3<3<3

look at Hal hES SO PRECIOUS

Updating earlier than planned fuck yeah!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

'This is unbelievable fucking luck that I'm having today, like seriously what the hell!?'

*He thinks back to minutes ago.*

---

==> Minutes in the past

"Diamonds, Spades, Hearts and Clubs."

Qrow stiffly sat against the booth wall right besides Deuce and behind him Boxcars was situated behind him, enjoying a new round of whatever he ordered from the barman Walter.

Hearts Boxcars was their giant wall of muscle, he wasn't as big as Cans from The Felt but he was certainly big and intimidating and inches taller than Droog. Of course he was wearing the standard black suit and shit that fitted him perfectly, on the front pocket of his suit laid the red heart that told everyone he was in the Card Quartet of the Midnight Crew.

Boxcars had surprisingly *light brown with blonde highlights* of shaggy and unkempt hair most of the time underneath his standard black hat, now being one of the rare times his hair was tamed and slicked back. Qrow never took the big ex-dersite as part blondie when he was human but surprisingly it worked well for him, his eyes on the other hand were a dark shade of brown.

His eyes narrowed beneath his goggles as he stared ahead and right at both Spades Slick and Diamonds Droog.

Spades Slick was the self-proclaimed leader of their Quartet as well as the crew, Qrow doesn't really know if that's true seeing how Droog made most of the plans and decisions but let the stabby guy think that and stay calm instead of flipping out. Slick, of course, was wearing the black suit and everything just as almost everyone did in their crew. On his front pocket was a dark gray spade, his symbol for their quartet and etc.

Slick had both very black hair and black eyes that stood out with mister mcstab-happy's pale skin. Now, it wasn't just Slick's attitude that put Qrow on edge, it was also a certain physical aspect of the guy that would keep bringing bad memories to his mind. Slick had a scar right over his right eye, diagonal slanting every so familiarly.

Instantly Slick's stupid scarred face is replaced with one that was furrier, angrier and doggier. Jack Noir.

Qrow had expected that and took a deep breath through his nose, clenching his fists inside his pockets before forcing his gaze away from Spades to Diamonds.

Diamonds Droog seemed to be the actual leader of them all, calm collected and acted much like it. Though he never comments on who was the true

leader among the four, he lets Slick call and appoint himself as their leader all he wants though he does take the lead if things went out of hand. He wears, again, the black suit and the front of his pocket showed the red diamond for his part of the quartet.

Droog had black hair like Slick's but his eyes were a chilling shade of blue, like the kind that would freeze your body if it glared and stare right through you as if he was looking right at your soul. His stare however didn't do that for Qrow and Hal, they've stared down worse things and the knowledge they held and remembered was worse then the man's stares.

"Qrow Davis." Droog smirked in greeting, amusement in his eyes. Both he and Qrow came to an understanding, at best they were akin to good and familiar business partners and at worst they were well acquaintances. Out of the four Qrow was closest to Droog while Hal got along with Deuce well enough since the short man was the most moral person of the four.

"Brat." Slick scowled in reluctant greeting, mutual hatred in his eyes. As expected both he and Qrow were the least closest, Qrow earning his hate by being a snide smartass and generally showing his dislike towards the older man because of his alternate self and him in general. Yeah, looks like every version of the spades themed male was almost alike in every way.

Though they had mutual **very** reluctant respect for each other's combat prowess. Hate it as he did, Qrow will admit that Spades had skill in blades that weren't just knives, he was already hard to beat without Bec prototyping himself before. Spades was reluctantly impressed with Qrow's handling over blades, though swords were more up to his ally just as Spades had knives in his but Qrow was very good a knife nonetheless.

That didn't stop them from both hating each other. Qrow hating the other more for obvious reasons.

"What do you guys want? I already knew you were going to contact me sometime this day, maybe even stretching it towards tomorrow but this was much earlier than I expected." *'Or planned'*, getting right to the point. Better to know what they wanted before giving them the drive, said drive didn't

just have that one guys entire history from last night but also several others and other information that the crew would love to have.

Slick seemed to perk, scowl transforming into a manic grin aimed at him, "Well brat, I decided to cash in that favor you owe us." and instantly Qrow's tense him practically made him *stone* at the moment, he gripped his thighs in a tight hold to calm himself.

It was inevitable really, a real matter of time that Slick would've found something to 'cash in' their debt to the crew and him. But fortunately now, they could get away with not doing the mobster asked and all Qrow had to do was give over the drive and they were out of the debt and free as they could be.

He was about to deny Slick, USB stick heavy in his pocket and ready to be given then and there. It would've been so easy, just give the stick and get the fuck out of there and get some Wendy's. That is... until Hal told him to wait.

Stiffly Qrow focused on Hal.

TF: you want me to do *what*

RA: Hear them out, aren't you curious as I am to know what they might ask us to do?

TF: fucking *hah* on the ask part anyway why cant we just give them the damned drive and get some wendys

TF: i thought you wanted wendys bro

RA: And I still do asshole, but we should at least hear them out before giving the stick. If anything it would seem impolite not to hear it out.

TF: or we just get them to shut the hell up, give the stick, get some wendys and forget today ever happened

RA: Yes that is a distinct possibility as well...

RA: But you're going to hear them out anyways.

TF: ...

TF: you know as soon as you make the rest of your limbs i am so going to kick your android butt in so many strifes in so many ways

RA: <3

RA: Love you too big brother ♡ .

TF: shut the fuck up halexander velvet davis

RA: Oh no, not the full name. Hey is Velvet really going to be my middle name now? Props to you for keeping the Strider tradition of girly ass names as our middle names bro. Also Halexander?

TF: halexander velvet davis i believe i told you to *stfu*

RA: Right

"Hey kid!"

Qrow is torn from his conversation with his snarky younger brother and sees an irritated Spades looking at him, scowl back on his face and anger clear in his eyes for Qrow to just ignore him the whole time right after he had just told him he wanted to cash in their debt.

"You're talking to the robo-brat aren't you? Take off the damned goggles Davis, or should I say Strider?" he demanded, finishing with a mocking grin. Qrow barely managed to withheld the growl of anger or the sneer of rage he had inside him, and here he thought his hate couldn't go higher for this man. Looks like he was proven wrong but *dammit he was going to be a professional about all this.*

"That's not who I am Slick. I am not Dave Strider, I am *Qrow Davis* and you know that. Dave Strider is *dead*." Qrow replied coldly, hard anger underneath that coldness. He lost the right to be Dave Strider the moment John died in his timeline and he wasn't going to be Dave Strider again even



if Dave died in this world, it just wasn't right to be this world's Dave Strider when he was *dead* and six feet under.

He would not replace the blonde in this world, just the thought of it didn't sit well with him.

Spades snorted glaring at him clearly not believing him. The whole crew suspected that he actually was this world's Dave Strider that had somehow faked his death or his death was faked for him and he was taken away to somewhere, theories varied for both Dave and Hal but Deuce's claim that he came back from the dead was instantly disregarded by both parties.

And despite them always having the chance so far of taking him and Hal hostage and force out money from the Striders for them, they didn't which really puzzled Qrow for a while.

"I'd think it'd be best for you to take off your goggles Davis, your brother can hear and see us regardless if he stays covering your eyes but we'd like your total attention for this." Droog said in a false kind but totally neutral tone. Qrow narrowed his eyes before scoffing and lowers his goggles to his neck, the red glass glinting in the low light.

Droog was right, the goggles picked up anything that he both hears and sees. They were better than his shades but he preferred his shades anyway. His goggles whirled and let out a soft ping, Hal was speaking but now that the goggles were around his neck he couldn't see his message or respond to him though Hal could still see and hear what he does and everything.

The only disadvantage to this was that fact he previously mentioned; Hal could still talk to him all the while hearing and seeing from his neck but Qrow couldn't respond or talk to Hal nor see the messages Hal would send him, Hal's been working on a new modification for the goggles but that wouldn't be added till it's finished.

Qrow stared at them both with his red eyes, eyes that were mutations and side-affects from the paradox slime genetic process. Striders and Lalondes all had this type of mutation, their eyes were unnatural colors of bright orange, pink, lavender-purple and bright lava red.

Apparently even without the game Striders and Lalondes from across the universes still had that mutation trait somehow, or maybe it was a rare genetic thing that was a thing here who knows.

Though his eyes were red they were very capable of turning orange or red-orange or orange-red, something that clearly involved with the fact he had been a sprite before. Whenever his wings were out his eyes would take on a shade of orange and turn red-orange or orange-red, and if he spent like *days* with his wings out his eyes would turn completely orange but after a few hours without his wings the orange would quickly fade back into bright red.

But it wasn't just that apparently, strong negative emotions will tint his vision and eyes with dark orange. It happened once and Qrow did not want that to happen again.

"So, what the fuck do you want."

Slick's scowl once more turned into a grin, teeth barred and slight bloodlust entering his eyes.

"Alright, Listen up kid. What I want yous to do..."

---

TT: Impossible.

GG: john, how could you?! >:(

GT: im *telling* you guys the truth!

GT: cmon guys back me up here!!!

GG: Um, yes. John really is telling the truth.

GT: Yes we've witnessed *dave confounding strider* alive and well today!

Chased right through the cemetery too!

TG: omfg roosie, jaadey uv got to believe us!

TG: no strings nothing at all, we chased *david eliza* ~~fucking~~ *beth strider* in a gogdamn graveyard!

TG: \*god

GG: but thats impossible! we were at his

GG: his *funeral* for fucks sake

GG: this isnt funny guys how dare you >8[

TT: Yes we've seen Dave's corpse right in his coffin, the officials and professionals confirmed that it was *Dave's dead body* and no one else's.

TT: I have no idea why you four are doing pulling such a bad and unacceptable prank on the day Dave was found *dead*.

GT: but rose!

GT: i swear were not joking, we would never joke about dave like that on today of all days!!!

GG: Please Rose, Jade, you have to believe us.

GG: We don't know how and why but Dave is alive, we're serious.

GT: Yeah, we would never pull something like this on today. Never today and never like this we swear!

TG: :(

TG: big sis this is serious shit that's happening right now

TG: dave's alive!

TG: dirk'll tell you too!!

TT: Dirk?

TT: I don't believe that one bit, Dirk wouldn't find this funny and would never go along with this prank.

GG: >:C

-- timaeusTestified [TT] is online in the group chat --

TT: Dirk. Do you know that about this whole bad act?

TT: What bad act?

TT: Oh.

TT: Rose, Jade, these guys are right and they aren't joking.

TT: Dave's alive.

GG:

TT:

TT: i

GG: WHAT

TT: I swear, this whole thing isn't some bad joke of a prank. Jane and John may be pranksters but you know they would never stoop this low. Besides, I was there with them. We chased Dave from his grave to the edge of the cemetery where he vaulted over the fence by doing an admittedly awesome

fucking pirouette off the tombstone and onto the other side.

TT: The fence was too high to vault over at a close distance and we lost Dave as he went into an alleyway, which we checked and found nothing.

GG: BUT THATS IMPOSSIBLE WE WERE AT DAVES FUNERAL HIS BODY WAS THERE AND THEY TOLD US IT WAS HIM IT WAS HIS BODY WASN'T IT?!?!?!?

TT: asdpiog

TT: This is

TT: Impossible

TT: We confirmed that it was Dave's body, *the best of the best were hired by your brothers to confirm if it was actually Dave or not.*

TT: I don't know.

TT: I don't know how and I don't know why but what I *do* know is that Dave's alive.

TT: And being a fuckass.

TT: Like, I don't fucking know on what's going on with him Rose. He ran from us, he ran from us after standing before his own fucking grave. He was crouched down and touching his grave before we came to it and kept saying he *wasn't* this, and I quote "this Dave guy" but he was clearly fucking Dave.

TT: I... see.

TT: Are you sure this was really Dave?

TT: Could he not have been just a doppleganger? Someone who by chance just looked very similarly to Dave?

TT: No.

TT: He was Dave I'm sure of it, his eyes were the kind of red that you just couldn't fake and were the exact shade of Dave's red eyes because he *was* Dave.

TT: You'll see what I mean soon, I told both my bros about this and we're going to try and find him again.

GT: Really?

GT: Um dirk, not to be a balloon popping scallywag but how exactly do you think we'll even find him? I mean, the city is huge along with the town!

GG: I agree Dirk, finding him will not be easy. I think it was only by chance that we encountered him back at the cemetery, whatever reason that caused him to be there if it weren't for you wanting to be early we would have never seen Dave in the first place.

TG: butt that doesnt sound like chance janey

TG: it sound like *fate* cuz if dave was alive all this time then why didnt he come back to us??? to dirk and his bros???? tf was he eben doin over the years hes been 'ded' and it was only a mattwr of time that we encontered him cuz hes alive and shit

TG: \*even \*dead \*encountered. srsly its been *years* like wtf dude

TT: Good point, something is up and I intend to find out one way or another. Also don't worry, we'll find him.

TT: I'm sure of it.

TT: ... This is all so impossibly bizarre but, if you all say so then I will help with what I can.

GG:

GG: i really dont know what's going on anymore, you all say dave's alive but i really doubt that. it's impossible! >:(

GG: but then even *dirks* saying it and..

GG: i just dont know!!!!!! DDD:

TG: aww jadey :(

TT: Don't worry Jade. Everything is going to be fine in the end when we find Dave, drag his ass home and interrogate the little shit on what the fuck happened.

GT: !!!!!!!

GT: jesus fucking christ guys you wont believe this!!!!!!!!!!

TT: What is it now John?

GT: its dad! he saw DAVE!!

GT: he was at the back of derse restobar near bunp n rump and dads sasscre emporium!!!

TT: What.

GG: WHAT

GG: Oh my.

TG: wait srsly?!!

GT: Jesus christ on a fucking cracker surely you jest!

TT: What the *fuck*.

TT: What was he doing there!?!? I dont

GT: GUYS DAVES HURT DADS TELLING ME HE WAS BLEEDING

TT: *THE FUCK*. That's it, fuck it, *everyone to Bump n Rump right the fuck now*.

GT: dirk wait! dad told me he left already, he escaped from dad after

shoving him inside or something! something about a man who was screaming for 'crow something' to come back and fight him. the guy left and dad tried to stop dave from leaving but he was too fast and he escaped to god knows where!

TT: shit

TT: We should still go there. Dave was there for some reason and I intend to find out.

TT: Maybe he left something that can give us a clue.

TT: At any rate, Bump n Rump. Now. Bring whatever the fuck you think you need or you think can help.

TT: We are finding Dave. We're doing that.

TT: We're making this happen.

TT: Well it's good to know that even in a state like this you still have the Strider in you to reference your brothers and their sayings and works.

TT: You fucking know it Lalonde.

---

"No."

Red with orange flecks glared into inky black.

"The fuck you just say brat?" Slick demands, abruptly standing and slamming his hands on the table and glaring down furiously at Qrow who stood his ground and glared right back at him, "Cuz I *obviously* didn't hear it clearly."

Qrow sneered, thoughts of being professionally serious thrown right out of the fucking window, "Oh I'm sorry old man, didn't know your hearing got even *worse* the last time we met. *N* to the fuckin' *O*, **no**. Is *that* loud and clear enough fuckass? Hal and I ain't doin' *shit* for ya bucko. So you can shove ye'r shitty ass *mission* down ye'r fucking *throat* for all we care." His Texan is showing slightly and he's standing as well, they're both at the same height much to their disgust as they would've liked to be looming over the other.

Slick snarls, "Well you ain't got no choice *birdboy*, you owe us *dumbass*." he snapped, suddenly smug and wearing a shark-like smile.

Qrow lets out a rough laugh, his goggles pinging but he's too angry and focused on the situation right now to care to know what Hal was sending him.

---

Back in their home, Hal makes a frustrated noise that sounded both human and robotic, a combination of a frustrated human growl slash groan plus a technical beep not to mention his voice sounds a bit auto-tuned due to his robotic throat, as he watches his brother on one side of his computer-vision, on the other there's a clip of a white car driving down the road.

"*Dammit Qrow!* Ugh, I should have focused more on modifying and upgrading the goggles!" Hal growls as he wheels his personally modified chair to otherside of his make-shift lab in their 'living room'. It's temporary, they were still cleaning up and building up the proper lab in one of the other room within the factory.

He watches the feed he's got from hacking into the traffic-camera that was near the street of where his brother and the Midnight Crew were in. He frowns as he switches to another feed to follow the white car, frowning even more when he sees it stop right in front of Sasscre's Emporium and is practically the king of frowns when he sees *James Egbert* get out of the car and stroll into his shop.

He facepalms, if he had a left arm currently it would turn into a facepalm x2 but he had to make do with one arm for now, and mutters. Because *of course* James Egbert would be visiting the Emporium today of all days right after Qrow was spotted by *Dirk and the others*. Of. Fucking. Course.

What was with Qrow's luck as of now? Not to mention Qrow seems to be losing himself to his anger and hate, while he *did* agree with Qrow on the matters about the 'mission' he would've been more professional and decline politely or something. Not insult Slick right in his face! His brother was an

overprotective, stubborn, emotional idiot that he for some reason still loves unironically like the brother he is.

Having actual human emotion after years of being semi-emotionless with the remnants of human emotions felt weird. It really did.

Back to the subject at hand; Qrow was not seeing his messages.

With the goggles down around his neck it would only uselessly ping and vibrate slightly every time Hal would send him one, he should've *really* focused on upgrading the goggles to let him *call* Qrow in times like this. Dammit!

"No, not really." Hal can practically *hear* the sense of victory and smugness that's coming from Qrow.

"You know why? This is why." The live feed coming from the goggles tilts and shake as Qrow gets the drive from his pocket and shows it to both Droog and Slick. Go right ahead Qrow, just do it because honestly there is nothing else left to do currently.

"The fuck is that."

"Information. Information and more, its the stuff you fuckasses wanted but could never access. It's even got the whole history of that dude you don't like, the guy Snowman was bragging about the last time you two met jackass."

Both members of the crew's eyes widened, he doesn't know about Deuce, he wasn't in view.

"Are you sure about that?" Droog asks as a calculative look enters his eyes, gouging to see if Qrow was telling the truth or calling a bluff. Droog was a master observer like Hal, so he knows that Qrow isn't bluffing.

"Seriously? Gimme dat!" Slick demanded as he leaned over to snatch the USB drive but was foiled as Qrow leaned back and hid the drive again, wagging his finger side to side as if scolding a toddler.



"Nah-uh Slick, bad mobster" Qrow cooed mockingly, jegus bro not good move! He must be seeing Jack Noir in Slick again to act like this, the stress of Dirk and the others seeing him probably didn't help too. Damn, Hal shouldn't have asked Qrow to visit the grave. But how was he supposed to know Dirk was coming there early?! The odds were so infinitesimal he disregarded the chance!

"I ain't handin' this to you unless you swear Hal and I's debt is over. We've got a lot of shit in this drive. Swear as Members of the Midnight Crew and you'll get the drive." Qrow demanded seriously, good he's going back to being professionally serious. That's good, great even, now if he could only maintain till the *end* of this meeting and nothing fucks up then today will be a better day and they could get Wendy's.

Slick and Droog exchanged glances, Slick's face filled with fury and doubt but it was clear that no matter how much he'd like to get the drive he was stubborn about his decision about the mission but Droog on the other hand didn't seem too amused with the mission in the first place and was obviously more interested in the USB within Qrow's hand.

Suddenly the diamond-themed man stood up and laid a hand on Slick's shoulder, a look of disbelief is on the spades-themed mobster. "Droog, you can't be serious, think of all the advantages we have if we got these brats under our power!"

"Advantages or not, the boy's not bluffing. Tell me Davis, among the vast information that you've collected gathered—assuming its as impressive as you imply it is. Tell me, is there information to one **Lord English**?"

Everyone tensed, Hal included. Even in this world Lord English was a feared name, still the boss of the Felt but not as personally active as they and Doc Scratch were and yes the cue ball headed douche was also a thing here only his head wasn't a cue ball.

Lord English was a mystery but he wasn't Caliborn that's for sure. They found that jackass along with Calliope a while ago, Hal was glad that Calliope existed here as a seperate entity from Caliborn even if they were twins. Wow, this world was just a show in for twins. Anyway, even Hal had a hard time looking for him within the internet, undernet, interweb and even

the dense network of the underworld. The former A.I. had clues and leads but no sure solid path towards the bastard.

From the slight bob of the feed Qrow had stiffly nodded, "Nothing personal about him, you know even Hal has a hard time looking for anything personal shit towards the fucker. But we got the next best thing; inside are coordinates to one of the guys safehouses that doubles as the Felt's gun and ammo supply. Not to mention the whereabouts of a couple of the Felts meeting places." Droog broke out into a wide impressed grin and for a split second Slick did as well before remembering that it was both he and Qrow who got that information and returned to scowling in fury. Hal's lips twitched into a grin as he sees Droog, yeah, they got this.

"You got yourself a deal kid, consider yourself debt-free from us. We swear as the Members of the Midnight Crew, Rise with the moon and fall back with the sun" Hal pumped his only fist into the air, *yes! Hell yes! Hell! Fucking! Yes!* They fucking did it! They were free from that bullshit debt!

"Pleasure doin' business with ya pardners." Hal had to snicker at the obvious slip of Texan from Qrow, awesome. Qrow was about to hand over the drive and he could leave and they would have Wendy's and that was that.

"Hold it for one fucking minute!" Hal's digital eyes narrowed as Slick interrupted, Qrow's arm recoiled at the interruption and no doubt Qrow's victorious mood was tarnished and anger replaced that. Dammit Slick.

"Droog you can't be serious here, what if they're just bluffin'?! I refuse to believe two fucking brats got more information than we did. They're two freakish brats for fucks sake!" Oh hell no. Hal growled, it sounded inhuman, and he heard Qrow do the same. Droog sent Slick a warning glare but it was clear that the so-called 'Leader' wouldn't take shit.

"Watch your fucking mouth Spades, these two 'freakish kids' aren't to be underestimated fucko and hah! You better believe we got more information than you, you don't fuck with us and expect to come out unscathed asshole. Aw, what's wrong? Little mobster dog getting angry? Need me to pat your head and give you treats? A scratch behind the ear and a stomach rub? Oh,

let me call your master and have her do it for me. Who was it again?  
Snowman maybe?" Oh fuck. Woowoow.

Hal would've loved to stay in awe over the insult but he was too worried and horrified as Slick practically *roared* and jumped at Qrow with knife in hand.

"QROW!!!"

The live video jolted and bounced as there was rapid movement from Qrow who hopefully dodged the obvious stabbing lunge from the mafiaman. For fuck's sake! Qrow better come home alive!

---

Qrow jolted as dodged to the side and out of the booth, wincing as Slick's knife knicked his neck. Dammit! Hopefully he didnt nick an artery, he grunted and covered the cut with his free hand as the other threw the drive back into his sylladex. Slick growled and yelled again, switching his knife to a fucking *handgun*.

Oh shi—**BANG**.

FUCKING HELL THAT WAS LOUD AND HURT.

Qrow hissed as he felt for his cheek, fuck that hurt for both his sensitive ears and cheek. He smelled gunpowder in the air as he panted lightly on the ground on his ass, back in the booth Slick struggled against both Deuce and Droog holding him back.

The enraged mobster hissed and growled, struggling against the type grip of both of his surbodinated howling curses and threats at them and Qrow. He tries to get his hand with the handgun out of Droog's tight grip, the taller man hissing at him to stop and calm down. Deuce was trying to do the same but caught Qrows eye and frantically motioned for the blonde to abscond out of there.

Like he'd have to tell them twice!

He was getting the fuck out of there, *but not without giving Slick something in return*. Qrow quickly got to his feet, swiftly getting something from his sylladex and throwing it at Slick's face as hard as he could.

Bullseye.

Slick yelped as he was hit directly on the head, the force of the impact actually sending all three crew members tumbling down into the booth's seat and table. Boxcars was currently missing from the scenario but Qrow passed him as he absconded, turns out the big guy went to piss and missed everything.

Qrow smirked as he thought back to the object he threw at Slick, it was a heavy bag of doggy treats with Snowman drawn on the front.

He exits through the back, passing the barman Walter who just opened the back door for him. What a gentleman. He skids to the side and hides behind the side of a dumpster near the back of the restobar, forgetting about the shop beside the bar that most definitely owned the dumpster he was hiding behind.

Qrow panted and winced as he felt his hips and legs, he's been running a lot today. They were starting to ache, but that was fine. He takes a deep breath and winces as both cuts sting irritably in the warmish air of the alley, he takes a moment before taking the USB drive out of his sykladex and into his hand and stares at it.

"Well, that went well huh Hal?" He said sarcastically, he frowns as he remembers that he wasn't wearing his goggles. He sighs before lifting a hand to put them back on.

*Only for the door to his right to open*

Qrow's eyes widened as a very familiar man steps out with garbage bags in one hand and the other holding the door open.

He uttered only one word when red eyes met blue, "**Fuck.**"

---

==> Back in the present

"D-Dave, how—" "**Sssh! Not now!**"

Qrow snapped at James, listening intently to the sounds of loud noises and crashes that was happening outside the door. James frowned, the noise was loud enough that he could hear them as well, was Dave in trouble? What happened? Wait, *he was hurt!*

Fatherly instincts arose and he rose up from the floor, he stood closer and examined the wounds "What happened?" he asked Qrow quietly, Qrow paused from listening and sent him a glare, though inwardly he was slightly freaking out about him and all.

"None of your business that's what. Now *ssh!*" Qrow irately slapped away the concerned hands that tried to prod at the bleeding cuts, he scowls as he looks down at his goggles. Great he was getting blood on them.

"**QROW DAVIS!!**" Qrow jerked from the door a bit, that shout was near the door. Fuck.

A few minutes passed by and the noise and shouting died down, during those minutes he hissed and fended himself from one concerned James Egbert who only grew more and more concerned with the teen.

Qrow cautiously cracked the door open, he sees nothing in the alley and fully opens the door. Stepping out into the alley "Alright, they're gone and the coast is clear." he mutters as he wipes the blood that was drying and still slightly flowing from his skin as well as the goggles.

"Dammit Hal is going to have a gracious fucking pirouette off his handle and kick my ass for this." He groans as he tugs slightly at the goggles, yeah his younger brother is going to bitch at him as soon as he outs them back on. He's a bit hesitant to put them back on now.

"Dave." Oh yeah, Dadbert. Qrow groans and looks back at James who was now adopting a stern face but his eyes show on how concerned he really

was, fuck. Qrow shifted uncomfortably and took a step back when James took a step forward.

Yeah he saw that and he didn't like it as his frown deepened. Damn. Looks like it was time to run.

"Yeeah, sorry about that. I'm just, gonna, *gonowbye!*" He didn't know why he said that instead of running but now he's running and cursing underneath his breath.

"Wait!" James started as Dave runs from him, *why?*

He looks like Dave and for some reason he believes he *was* Dave. Which should be impossible, because, you know! Dave had died years ago! But there he was, alive and looking around to be his sons age. Wait, he's running, no he needs to know what was happening and help Dave with those cuts!

"Everyone's so fucking persistent!" Qrow curses as he looks back for a moment and sees James running after him. His hips and legs ached and pulsed in protest but he was getting the fuck out of there dammit! He escapes into the streets, dodging people and pedestrians, he groans as he sees James still chasing after him. Egberts! Damn their stubbornness and athletics!

He nearly trips over a few times but somehow managed to stay out of James' reach, he ducks into another alley that was narrow and slightly twisty. He manages to dodge shit in his way and when he makes an abrupt left turn he has enough time to hide from James when he skids to a stop and goes down the left alley where Qrow was hiding in. The teen had hid in a pile of boxes, he holds his breath as the older male passes him.

Qrow lets go of his breath when the male ducks to where he think Qrow went. Qrow groaned and cautiously rose from the boxes, frowning sharply at the smell of garbage in the alley. He's so going to take a bath when he gets home, but first: Wendy's.

He's going to have to buy Hal's favorite shit along the way to make amends with him as he winces as his cuts sting again, he's careful to turn the goggles off no doubt pissing the android off more but right now he didn't really want to face Hal's wall of red text. He'll deal with it in person, preferably with many gifts for the younger.

Qrow sighs as he exits the narrow alleyway, tugging the hood over his head and slapping bandaids on the cuts. Shitty but it would do for now. He glances around before putting his goggles on and makes his way to the nearest Wendy's, Burger King, and a possible auto-shop store.

Just. Fuck his day.

### Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! I really like this story, can't wait to get to the part where D and Bro see Qrow XD

Thanks again to both Nira and Toppis who are both great artists and provided me with two great pieces of fan art X] like seriously thanks for liking my stuff everyone!

Anyway, till next chapter ;D

# Investigating and Preening

## Chapter Notes

INSPIRATION HIT ME LIKE A FLAMING SEMI-TRUCK. HERE HAVE SURPRISE EARLY UPDATE XD.

You guys are awesome! This story is awesome! Everything is awesome!

Also Qrow and Hal bonding time :D.

Note: Qrow and Hal are completely brothers and maybe even moirails at a certain angle, they are not romantically involved with each other in this story and will not be in the future. In fact, I have no idea who to pair the two with. Though I've been thinking stuff about Hal lately and I *think* I know I want to pair him with :P

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

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"So to recap: Dave was sitting against the dumpster in this alleyway. His right cheek and left side of his neck had been cut and was bleeding but you didn't notice that because you were in shock at the sight of him. Dave cursed, of course, at the sight of you also in shock before you both heard a loud scream. Dave reacted and pushed you back inside and followed as well and quickly closed the door but kept his hand on the handle and his ear against it.

Afterwards there were loud noises and shouting outside in the alleyway, the shouting was about 'Crow' something but you didn't pay much attention to it because fatherly instincts rose at the realization that Dave was hurt. After a few minutes the noises subsided and Dave went out, muttering to himself before he came to the realization you were there and ran for it.

You tried to follow but unfortunately Dave got away. Is that right Dad?"



"Yes dear daughter, that is exactly what happened."

Jane frowned and hummed, looking down at the notes she took that was mostly about what her dad had told her. Dirk by her side glancing at the alleyway in disquiet, no doubt concerned for the state his twin was in and what situation that had previously happened to lead him into such a state.

Currently Jane, Roxy, Dirk and Jade were in the alleyway with Jane and John's father. The same alley where he had found Dave in.

Rose, John and Jake were in Derse restobar questioning the owner of what happened, they had yet to return with information on what had happened.

James sent Dirk a look as the blonde knelt at the dumpster, trying to picture what he had saw and described to them "Though when he was muttering I was able to hear a little bit of it. Something about a pirouette and also a name. Hal." All four teens perked, pirouette? That was most *definitely* a Dave thing to say!

No one really knows how, why or when he made it a thing, the whole 'acrobatic pirouette' joke that only those close to Dave knew about really. It was made by Dave and that just added to more proof that Dave was alive and that red-eyed blonde they had chased down *was* Dave.

Jade on the other hand was struggling a bit, but more and more she was beginning to believe it and she didn't know what to say or how to react because how does one react to the revival of a best friend after 4 years of their supposed death?! She doesn't know what's going on but rage was slowly bubbling inside her gut, *she wanted answers*.

And she wasn't the only one, *everyone* wanted answers but unfortunately they couldn't get those answers unless they found Dave and dragged his ass back to them.

Jane bit the end of her pen lightly, thoughts and theories trying to form in her mind but each one would be stopped at a predictably dead end and she was back to square one.

They perked slightly as the backdoor of the restobar opened with Jake, John and Rose exiting. Though their worried and downcast faces didn't imply anything good.

Roxy bounced towards her close-cousin and practical-sister with a worried frown, "Well? What happened?"

"We do not know. The owner refuses to say anything helpful and his skill in body language is suspiciously high, he gave nothing out, however," Rose's face pinched and darkened with worry "implications at a certain part of his establishment does *not* paint a pretty picture."

Jake bit his lip, "Whatever happened in there, I'm really getting worried to what Dave's involved with... I smelled *fresh gunpowder* and *blood* in one of the booths. Not to mention the indention and frightening evidence we found..." Dirk's face paled and his heart stuttered in worry, his ironic mask crumbled the moment he saw their worried and concerned faces.

Just what the *fuck* has his twin been *doing*?

James face hardened at the implications, what has young Dave been doing? What was he involved with? *How was he alive when he was so clearly dead years ago, he was one of the people who checked his corpse!*

John looked at the ground, hands behind his back and clenching tightly but says nothing. The air is tense and everyone is thinking along the same lines.

*Just what in the name of fuck was happening .*

---

"You. Are a shithead, you know that?" A deadpanned glare.

"Yep." Calmed acceptance.

"You. Are an *insufferable prick*, you know that?" A deadpanned stare.

"Yup." A rustle of plastic and a still calmed acceptance.

"..."

"..."

"Get your butt over here so I can check your ass dickweed. Leave the offerings on the table." Hal sighed irately, metal fingers rubbing at his nose as Qrow walks from the entrance to the table to leave the countless plastic bags he's carrying.

Hal watches with a pointed frown as Qrow takes off the slightly blood-covered goggles and shakes off the also slightly bloody hoodie. Thank goodness it wasn't that noticeable, Qrow would've freaked a lot of people out more with that and he already freaked, weirded and worried some people out with the slightly bloody band-aids on his cheek and the more observant with the left side of his neck when he went to buy all the shit he needed to make it up to Hal.

Thankfully he managed to get them to focus on getting him the stuff he needed to buy instead of getting help for him, he was fine. Honest.

"You are *not* fine." Hal interrupted with an irritated tone in his semi-auto-tuned voice, okay Hal could read minds now, "It's less of reading your mind and just looking at your emotive eyes. Your Strider-face is flawless as expected but the downfall to the shades is that it leaves the eyes more capable of showing emotions and shit, thankfully you got a cool ass pair of shades and goggles to help with that."

Point.

"Is it really necessary to wrap my neck, why can't you just slap a band-aid there and call it a day." Hal snorts, digital eyes giving Qrow a look as the other blonde tilted his head to let Hal bandage up his neck anyway after inspecting and treating it. Qrow didn't feel much pain other than a spiked sting and whatever, it didn't hurt as much anymore even as Hal dabbed alcohol against both wounds.

~~Doesn't hurt as much as being impaled---~~

The whole process was quick seeing Hal had prepared in advance and Qrow just let Hal do his thing.

"The nick on your neck was deeper and closer to an artery than expected, definitely leaving a little scar but it'll disappear in a few months or so. Awesome insult by the way, I'd appreciate it more if it weren't for the fact you weren't really in a setting to be insulting Slick in any way. But you get points for it nonetheless."

"Sweet."

"Now get on your stomach and get your wings out, preening time."

"Aw, *what?* Hal didn't we do this two days ago?"

"All the more reason to preen, this *should* be a daily thing Qrow but you insist otherwise. Now move your fat ass and show me the wings, it's for your own good bro."

Qrow moved to object before closing his mouth shut and grumbled, he begins to lie down on his stomach like instructed and makes himself as comfortable as he could on the old but comfy couch they had.

He had mixed feelings about 'Preening time', since he was still part crow he obviously had avian tendencies, instincts and unfortunately: needs. One of those needs was preening his wings so they could stay healthy and looked clean, which was hard to do on his own. Trust him he tried back on the golden ship and he had been too prideful and embarrassed to ask anyone like Jade or *gog forbid*, John.

The only reason he could preen himself back then was because he had used his sprite-tail mostly for the preening part, as much as he loved having legs again he couldn't argue on the fact that the tail was very useful in many unsuspected ways. Preening was one of them.

Now that he had two functioning human legs he had to rely on Hal to preen his wings, which was *very* awkward during the first time. Mostly for Qrow as he had to coach and guide Hal throughout the whole process.

Now though, Hal was mostly better than even *himself* now with the advantage of being a very fast learner and still part A.I. that had access to the internet.

It was still slightly awkward for Qrow seeing he was really used to doing it on his own. Though deep inside he really enjoys the gesture his little brother does for him and he's pretty sure Hal knows that much to his embarrassed frustration.

Qrow shivers as his wings phase through his shirt, will *never* get used to that. He draped his left wing over the back of the couch as Hal moved his chair so he could get to his right wing and start on that side.

As usual he feels the pleasant tingle as Hal's warm metal fingers gently press against his feathers, his face warms at the feeling and he buries his head into the arm of the couch to hide the red tint of his face even though he knows Hal knows its there. So. *Embarrassing*.

"Oh man up big bro, you'd think by now you'd be cool with this." Hal says teasingly, and he just *knows* there's a stupid smug smirk on his face. The semi-human chuckles at the muffled but clearly frustrated groan he gets from his older brother.

"*Shut up Hal.*"

The frustration is slightly ruined as his voice wavers a bit as Hal continues preening his right wing, it was feeling a lot better all of a sudden.

"You know, you've been telling me to shut up a lot. I detect a lot of those being lies because you love your little brother and you'd never really want me to shut up, my voice is simply too awesome and you would surely miss the fuck out of it just like how a beautiful dame misses her beloved during a fucking world war of awesomeness."

Qrow groans in frustration again and this time succeeds on doing it without wavering, "Halaxander Velvet Davis I do believe I told you to *shut the fuck up* and just get this over with." Hal snorts at that, fingers moving from one part of the wing to the other and getting closer to Qrow's back.

"Again with the full name? Also *Velvet*? I would've thought you would've gone for Scarlet, that seems more like me. At least, the shade is more my color than velvet."

"Oh you'd like that wouldn't you? Well too bad, you're a Velvet now. Not a Scarlet." Qrow grimaces as his voice does this weird thing, an echo comes from his mouth slightly and it's rougher and avian sounding. He's speaking in two voices, one more inhuman than the other.

He hates it when he does that.

He *also* hates it when he actually gogdamn *caws*, which is what he let out when Hal pressed down slightly on a joint and it feels *great*.

"Fucking *bird stuff* man." Qrow complains and shivers as Hal's fingers are now touching the base of his wing where it meets his back. He looks over his shoulder to look at his wing, Hal really has become an expert in preening. It looks better and shit.

"Better?" Hal asks and Qrow grumbles but nods his head nonetheless, "Good, now flip sides would you? Your right wing is done for now, let me do your left." The elder Davis sighed and shifted, sitting up to turn around and face the other side of the couch and substituting his left wing for his right wing on the back of the couch and Hal now has Qrow's left wing in hand.

"Things would be so much easier if I had both hands, I'm nearly done. I wanted to have you get more shit for my hand but you did a head start so thanks for that." Hal says casually as he carefully rakes his warm metal fingers through his feathers, Qrow glowers after doing a bird-like chirp at the feeling.

"And things would be so much *better* if I could stop being gogdamn bird-like in the bullshit aspects of caws and peeps like a fucking dumb bird chick or something." Qrow mutters as he lays his head over his arms on the couch arm.

Hal hums but says nothing and focuses on Qrow's wings.

Minutes later Qrow stretches both his back and wings as he gets off the couch, that was one of the more speedy preening sessions. Not that he was complaining. ~~Or disappointed on how fast it was that was just the bird in him talking~~

"Thanks lil' bro, now let's actually eat some of the shit I bought before it gets too cold huh?"

"Fuck yes, you got Wendy's?"

"Of fucking *course* I did dude, that and a few burgers from Burger King."

"Nice man."

---

"David, Dereck, what you're saying is a complete *impossibility*. The dead stay dead, they do not live again. *Especially* if the dead had gunshot, stab and slice wounds. The amount of damage Dave received is enough to kill a grown man *thrice* over, it's actually very overkill to do that amount of violence on a 12 year old."

D sent Roxy's mother, Rosaline, a look of frustration, "As if I didn't know that already Rosie, I was the one who had to see him first being the eldest of us. We had *evidence and confirmation* about Dave's corpse and *yes* that *was* Dave's motherfucking corpse but then Dereck and I get a call from our little bro that Dave was *alive* today." Besides him Dereck stiffly nodded, fingerless gloved hands clutching tightly on the bottle of applejuice he had. Dave's favorite brand of his favorite juice, it used to be D's favorite too but he didn't really feel the same way anymore ever since Dave 'died'.

They were all in Rosaline's lavender colored car, Rosaline's private chauffeur, one Casey Salamance who was Rosaline's most recent chauffeur after Rosaline fired the last one, was at the wheel as usual whenever they took Rosaline's car.

"I want to say that it's a joke but I know *Dirk* of all people wouldn't joke about something like that... Maybe it was just someone who looked incredibly like Dave?" Rose's mother, Roxanne, asked with a small frown. The usually drunk woman was sober, she didn't dare drink a *drop* today of all days but hearing the things D and Dereck said to both her and elder sister made her urge for a drink slightly.

Bro shook his head, "Dirk says that it *is* Dave. Says that the guy they met at the cemetery had the same kind of red you can't fake, like Dave's kind of red. And like you said Rox, Dirk doesn't joke about this kind of thing and the kid's sure as fuck that Dave's alive and shit." The younger twin Strider sighed and thumbed along the AJ's cap, he didn't know what to think about it all.

Rosaline shook her head, "Regardless on what's going on it is still improbable, one's resurrection is simply impossible by science and we all know magic is not really real no matter how much we would like to think it was." Roxanne nodded, agreeing with her seeing as she was the scientist and most experienced in science. They simply didn't have the technology or knowledge for that, and magic was *obviously not real*.

~~Heh~~

D scoffed, "Again: *Did you think I didn't know that?* I have my doubts Lalonde but you know Dirk, *I* know Dirk, we all know Dirk and he doesn't fuck around with shit like this. Didn't Roxy message you Rosie about it? He said that she was there with him when it happened, and I'm sure as fuck that they told Rose and Jade about this and she as hell would've told you about it."

Both Lalonde sisters exchanged looks and Rosaline answered, "Our phones were unfortunately off at the moment of work, we both had to concentrate



and did not want distractions. We merely presumed it was just our daughters telling us that they were back from the cemetery was all."

Roxanne nodded vigorously, "Yeah! You guys know it's dangerous for me to be distracted when I'm working on big projects, I can be distracted only *a little bit* but anything bigger than that and it's *boom*, hospital time."

Both Striders nodded, yeah they had their moments where they *needed* their phones to be off and silent. Unfortunately that had its downfalls that were obvious to the four of them but they couldn't really help it despite how they wanted that to change.

"Madam Rosaline, we are nearing the cemetery. We should arrive in a few minutes." Casey informed with a bright smile and paused her smile to blow a stray yellow strand of hair from her face before smiling widely again with beaming blue eyes, Rosaline smiled back at her.

"Thank you Casey, wonderful job as always my dear."

"Shucks, you flatter me madam."

Roxanne giggled and whispered to her elder sibling "*Rosie she's so adorbs, much better than the old chaff really. Keep her for a long time 'kay?'*" The older Lalonde merely chuckled and gave her younger sibling a small grin and whispered back, "*Of course.*"

D and Bro sighed as they see the cemetery, despite Dirk's claims of Dave being alive they obviously still had their doubts and even then they would still visit Dave's grave because it was really a tradition now. A sad tradition but a tradition nonetheless.

"We've arrived madam."

"Again, thank you Casey. Let it be known your services are simply wonderful little one."

Casey's smile could've been the freaking sun for all they cared, it was unanimous that Casey Salamance was an adorable young woman and a

quick favorite among the group of both the adults and the teens, especially John who adored Casey in a-not-crushing on her way but in a weirdly-fon-almost-fatherly way. It was complicated but not any of them cared for the schematics.

"Yes Madam Rosaline! I shall be awaiting nearby when you're finish."

Although Casey had heard *everything* that the four blondes had discussed she kept it to herself and didn't mention it and the four knew that they could trust her to keep quiet.

All four blondes, two Striders and two Lalondes, exited the car with grace and poise that only those of their genetics and stature could have mastered. Dirk, Roxy and Rose would soon enough learn to do that with as much poise, grace and awesomeness. It was in their blood. ~~And if Dirk was right about Dave then he would learn too.~~

The cemetery was empty, not really unusual. It was always ever empty on today, before when they first started this tradition it would've been full to the brim with fans and the like but the Striders and Lalondes were *not* happy with that. Especially the Striders.

The event that happened 3 years ago was still talked about to this day but not any of them cared for it because they had the right to do it dammit, today was an important day for them and like hell they were going to let *strangers* ruin it!

Rosaline, Roxanne, D and Bro walked leisurely on the path the cemetery provided, silent as the graves around them. When they arrive at Dave's grave they pause.

Dave's tombstone was not the normal grey stone that all the other tombstones and graves had, instead the stone was red in the closest shade they could do that reminded them of Dave.

*Here lies Dave Elizabeth Strider*

*December 3rd, 2001 - August XX, 2013*

*Good twin. Best bro.*

Underneath the scripture was Dave's favorite symbol, a scratched record.

Every year they would come on his date of death and on his and Dirk's shared birthday, both Dirk and Dereck would alternate in leaving either a bottle of AJ and a smuppet doll on Dave's grave while D would leave an object themed of his SbaHj series that Dave loved so much. Today Dirk was supposed to leave the smuppet while Bro would leave the bottle of AJ, thankfully even with what happened it seemed that Dirk didn't forget his part and left a plush red smuppet doll on top of Dave's grave.

Bro was about to complete his part when he looked down at the grave and frowned with narrowed eyes, he caught Rosaline's gaze and they shared a look.

Something was wrong.

D noticed Bro's hesitation and turned to him, a pack of SbaHj themed panties in hand, "Dude, what's wrong?" Bro didn't answer and just fell down on one knee with Rosaline doing the same despite the risk of her dirtying her beautiful black and dark violet dress.

"Sis? What're you doing?"

Rosaline shushed her, eyes narrowed determinedly as she patted against the ground that laid above and buried Dave's coffin, Bro doing the same and with each pat his frown only seemed to get darker.

After a moment with both Roxanne and D sharing weirded out looks both of their siblings stopped with Rosaline standing back up and Bro clenching a fist against the ground and his teeth visibly grinding as if he was angered by something.

"What was it?" Roxanne asked with a sense of wariness at the serious look she's seeing in her older sister's eyes, she yelps in surprise at the sudden deep growl Bro emits and D is looking at him incredulously as well as worriedly.

Rosaline's lips pursed into a thin line, "The ground has been tampered with... it's as if-" *"Someone dug up Dave's grave."*

Bro interrupted harshly, his hand leaving visible marks on the ground. Roxanne gasped and D was stunned before he felt anger as well, "What? Explain!" D barked and suddenly Bro was in D's face with a frown stewing in controlled rage.

*"Someone messed with our little brother's grave David. And when I find the fucker that did this, they are going to pay. They've dug up the ground, grass is just growing out of the dirt and not growing as if the fucking gardener or caretaker of this shithole cut it down cuz that asshole rarely does any fucking work. No. Someone motherfucking dug at Dave's fucking grave."*

Rosaline cut between them, slightly and gently pushing Dereck back with Roxanne doing the same with D who's face was now visibly showing his anger as well. That was just *fucked up*, who *does* that?

"As much as I, too am in anger you must focus on the more important matter on hand." Rosaline told them sharply.

"And what's more important than some dumbass *fucker daring to dig up my little brother's grave Rosie?*" D demanded, frustratingly throwing the pack of SbaHj panties back into his sylladex.

Roxanne was the one to answer with a contemplative frown on her face, "Whether or not Dave's coffin and corpse is there. Why would they want to do that? Also Dirk says he's seen Dave alive right? Rosie, can you estimate the time the grave was dug up?"

Rosaline frowns and squints at the grave, "I don't know when exactly but it was definitely recent, the caretaker neglected to cut down the amount of grass in the cemetery again but thankfully that is somewhat a good thing. Telling by the height of the grass both on the grave and around it, perhaps months ago? I cannot tell properly and I am not much of an expert in this." she says somewhat dryly but at the same time serious.

D grunted before looking down at the grave, yeah he *totally* could see the difference now, "... So what, someone's been digging up dead brothers and, for fucks knows how and why, bringing them back to *fucking life*? *Just what in the name of motherfuck is going on?!*"

Roxanne shook her head, "We don't know if they did that, for all we know they dug up the grave just to bury something along with Dave's coffin? I don't know! The theories are endless and we don't have enough information. We can only tell if," Roxanne gulped and sighed before whispering something that had both David and Dereck freezing up "if we, dig up Dave's grave. Again. Look I know it sounds fucky but we don't know and we should probably make sure, just in case."

Both D and Bro look conflicted, wanting to argue but the logic was there so they just stewed in silence.

Rosaline and Roxanne exchanged looks, both Lalondes looking sadly at each other and at the Striders. They have no idea what's going on, they think nobody did and that was *so frustrating*.

Roxanne sighed before thinking back to what D had said about her phone, maybe Rose, Dirk and their friends had something? She gets her phone from her sylladex and checks her messages, her breath hitches and gets the attention of all three other blondes.

"What is it?"

Roxanne looked at them stunned and serious, "James saw Dave." Instantly both Striders postures are straight as rulers "He's at Bump n Rump with Dirk and the kids."

Bro frowned turned to walk, "Well? What're we waiting for? Let's go meet with the lil shits and get some info on all of this!" he says to them and they're hurrying back to get Casey and to get to Bump n Rump.

Back in the cemetery at Dave's tombstone, colorful glowing sparks appear on both the gravestone and the ground for one second before disappearing without a sound.

There was more to this than what everyone thought there was.

---

"Man, Alpha Dave Strider is a fucking film *genius*." Qrow commented with a grin as both he and Hal lounged on the couch, eating food as Sweet Bro and Hella Jeff teh meivo parte 2 played on their tv.

Hal scoffed, "Figuring that out *now* big bro? Shame on you, every Dave Strider, *no matter what version*, is guaranteed to be fucking awesome." Qrow snorts and frowns a little as he caught the subtle under line of '*You are awesome, you are Dave Strider and of course you're fucking awesome idiot*' there.

He ignores it in favor of enjoying D Strider's work of art.

Qrow blinks and rubs his eyes underneath his orange aviators for a moment, his back is weirdly tingling, strange Hal had just preened them minutes ago and he had his wings out for that the entire time! Qrow sighs with irritated before standing up briefly and climbing up the couch to sit on the back of the couch as he shivers with his wings appearing once again.

Sitting with wings the length of your body on a couch wasn't really comfy and he didn't want to deal spending the 7 minutes, 8.52 seconds and 1.3 milliseconds of trying to find a comfy position to eat and watch and shit with his big ass wings in the way. So he sits on the back of the couch and lets his wings hang from his back and the couch.

Hal gives him a brief look before focusing back on the movie.

Both are too focused on the movie to see the small and brief spark of colorful light that appeared in between Qrow's wings and back, it disappears as fast as it appears.

All was seemingly normal for the two for the rest of the day and the following days, possibly a full week, after that.

They don't forget today of course, never would but they are more cautious and careful now. Everything seems normal until just next week where things kick up a notch and Qrow curses Sburb and everything involved with it.

## Chapter End Notes

PLOT! THERE IS PLOT! heheheheheheehhehhehe :D

Things are going to get interesting ;3

Thanks for all the support!

Next chapter we see familiar but different faces; coughcoughtrolsandshitcoughcough; and we explore more with Qrow and Hal about this world and meet their acquaintances and allies.

# Boxes, Bees and Lions

## Chapter Notes

*toppis* You beautiful artist you! Just, look at [Halaxander Velvet Davis](#)!!  
I love it! :DD

Also the first sign of the trolls! Well, they're not trolls in this story. Not *exactly* anyway ;) and not all of them are exactly fully human or normal humans but then again, they're originally trolls and nothing about them in reality is exactly normal is it?

**Warning:**#TW #Implied Death #Implied Murder #Violence #Hashtag #Language #Lots of stuff ;]

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

"Where the fuck did it go."

RA: Ten meters to your left, it's heading towards the river bank.

"Got it, but dear motherfuck is this guy fast."

RA: Indeed.

Qrow grunted as he started to jog through the forest. Through his orange shades he looked around carefully, he's ready to use any of his strife specibi if he caught movement of any kind. It's not long before he reaches the river, he hides behind the trees as he spots his target.

"Gotcha you lil' piece of shit." Qrow whispers and takes out his silent pistol, he had multiple strife specibi in his strife deck for whatever reason. He can't remember but both his sylladex and strife deck had been like that ever since they woke up in this world months ago, Hal even had his own that was nearly identical to his.



Qrow cocked the pistol and aimed, quiet as fuck.

His target stood still in front of the river, curiously looking over itself from the reflection of the water. His target was an imp, a large one but still an imp. At least it wasn't an ogre or a fucking basilisk, those shits were harder to deal with but he could take them.

The imp was cat-like with colorful clothing, its skin was black and had two black tentacles emerging from its back. Thankfully all the game constructs they had encountered weren't ones that had Bec's powers, and hopefully it would stay that way for a *long* time. But knowing how much of a dick the game and universe was, they both knew it was only a matter of time before a game enemy comes in with Bec's OP First Guardian bullshit powers.

He pulled the trigger. The pistol makes no sound and the imp is hit, it cries out and before it could move or escape he pulls the trigger again, and again, and again.

With each gunshot Qrow comes out of hiding and keeps shooting at the soon-to-be-dead imp.

Its cries of pain fell deaf in Qrow's ears, soon enough Qrow switches from pistolkind to 1/2swordkind and makes the final blow of cutting the imp's head off. 1/2swordkind was actually quite powerful, he knew, he used it for years before. Why use 1/2swordkind when he had swordkind already? Well... no. Not when the weapon allocated in the card was *his* Bro's unbreakable katana. Just. No.

~~Bro's **bloody** katana is stuck in his swordkind strife card, fuck fuckfuckfuckfuck. Why?!~~

The body of the imp doesn't explode with grist, they weren't in the game but the body *does* still turn into grist. Qrow waits patiently, the body slowly morphs into grist after 4 minutes, 1 second and 3 milliseconds. He walks over towards the pile of grist, it's a bunch of normal blue grist with a sapphire and a ruby in it, not bad.

He takes a handful of grist and it doesn't disappear, like he said, they weren't in the medium nor in the game so it seemed that grist took on a more physical form here. But they were still used as they were originally.

You see, Hal *somehow*, ***somefuckingway*** managed to make a very crude but at least workable *alchemiter*. It wasn't that impressive in game wise but in a world like this it would've been a fucking *legendary masterpiece*; a machine capable to combining objects flawlessly and has no batteries?! Yeah, Hal could've sold it off for *millions* of bucks if it weren't for the fact that it needed grist to power itself as well as to combine objects.

It didn't need cruxite at all which *was really fucking impressive* but it needed a *lot* of grist. They managed with the grist they got from the sudden appearances of game minions and imps that for some unfathomable reason show up, turns out the horns on Hal's head weren't just for decorations or radio wave signals or something.

Whenever something from the game appears, an enemy or maybe on the rare occurrence a pile of grist or something, Hal can sense exactly *when* it appears and can figure out the general area of where it landed.

They, again like so many other things, have no fucking idea why, how or what but they chose not to question it just like how Qrow doesn't question Hal how he managed to make a fucking alchemiter-like machine with only one hand and other pieces of machinery around. Though then again they had been with the Midnight Crew at the beginning, bluh.

After last week's events both he and Hal stayed away from the Crew until Spades cooled down or some shit, and it seemed that the Crew weren't going to bother them for a while so it was a good thing. But eventually they would have to contact Hal and Qrow again, whether for revenge or for the stick that Qrow still had.

Yeah, he still had the USB stick drive. It was stuck in his sylladex until further notice, it was still useful and knowing Diamonds Droog he'd still ask for the drive nonetheless and they could still strike a deal. If not, then they'd sell the drive to the highest bidder in the underground information market.

Well, that is if they could do it without alerting the Felt too early.

He captchalouges all the grist.

RA: Your aim and gun skills have improved greatly.

RA: As expected from my big brother really.

RA: Soon enough I'll be able to do it properly, I'm almost finished with the first prototype of my arm. It's not perfect but it'll do for now, things will be so much easier with two metal hands instead of one.

"Good for you man, sense anything else?"

RA: Hold on.

RA: Robo-sensing...

RA: Robo-sensing...

RA: Robo-sensing...

"Smartass."

RA: You know it. 🦋

RA: And for your answer, no. That should be the last one for today. Now get your ass here and bring home the loot.

RA: I need to alchemize one final component for my arm.

"Roger fucking that, Qrow Davis currently homebound."

With that, Qrow lets his wings out. Taking off with a small huff, heading home.

---

"What in *fuck's* **name**. Is this." Bro stared along with his older twin, Rosaline and Roxanne stood before them. Both looking grim but also confused and interested at the object laid in front of them on the table.

Roxanne shook her head and left her silent thinking, "We don't know. I found it buried at Dave's grave. The coffin was there but... the body wasn't. Instead, I found this." she motioned towards it.

Both Striders felt anger, anger at the knowledge that someone tampered and messed with the grave of their little brother but also they felt confused. Wondering what the fuck has been going on.

Was Dirk right? Was Dave really alive again? The body was gone, instead something else replaced it.

It was a small chest. A small green chest with strange symbols engraved into it, on the top engraved was a red cog, on the right side was four lines that formed vague shapes, two bright sky blue ones and two green ones. On the left side were two symbols, a white symbol that almost looked like wings and a maroon-pinkish symbol that looked like a heart. On the back was a carved yellow sun and a connected white spiral within a black circle. On the front was a single symbol, a dark blue spiral that didn't connect.

There didn't seem to be any lock but it was sealed shut and couldn't be opened no matter what happened. Later on, D even tried a crowbar and it didn't even budge.

Though what was the strangest part was that in the middle of the red cog on the top was a glass surface, it seemed to be like a screen or a touch interface seeing it was black as night currently and betrayed none of the contents inside the damned box. However once again, they could do nothing with it. Not even Bro who was a bit hesitant in messing with the screen and wary to what might be inside.

"Well, what the fuck do we do with this piece of shit?" D asked as he tossed away the crowbar, his hands aching at the attempt of prying the box open. *Goddamn* was that thing shut tight. Though for some reason his eyes

kept straying towards the red cog on top, he resisted the urge to trace along its carving.

Rosaline hummed, observing the box with critical eyes. She can't help but notice that the sun symbol very often, like the symbol was calling to her faintly and that it felt very familiar, "These symbols feel familiar, have we seen them before?" she asked tentatively.

Bro grimaced as he looked the box over, the heart symbol drawing his eyes more often than not, "I'm pretty fucking sure, *no* but. Fuck, yeah you're right. They *do* feel familiar but I'm pretty darn sure that we haven't seen these *exact symbols* before." he mutters, fingers tracing the heart symbol.

"Hmm, yeah sis is right. These symbols are niggling in my head funnily but it's bringing nothin' to the mind. 'Specially that dark blue spiral there, it's familiar but unless I was piss-ass drunk then nop. I don't remember seeing it, sober at least." Roxanne added her part, rubbing a thumb against said dark blue spiral.

Roxanne shook her head, "Anyway, I could take this back to my lab and try to find a way to open it." she says, snapping their thoughts back together and distracting them away from the strange but very familiar symbols.

Rosaline shook her head, rubbing at her forehead for a moment before nodding. "Right"

Bro shrugged and sent her a thumbs up while D nodded at her, "Go right ahead Roxbox." Roxanne grinned at him and saluted.

"I promise to share what I find with all y'all. Speaking of lab, I need to finish the leftover paperwork *ugggh*." Groaned the scientist much to their amusement.

Whatever was inside that box, they were going to find out. That and find answers and Dave.

---

-- uraniumUmbra [UU] is pestering roboticAutomaton [RA] --

UU: hal?

UU: oh i hope i'm not bothering yoU at a bUsy moment bUt

UU: it's been qUite a while since we've spoken

UU: i do apologize if i've interrUpted anything thoUgh

RA: Nah, it's fine.

RA: Currently doing nothing right now, just waiting patiently for my bro to come back with some sweet loot.

UU: oh! i see

UU: and what pray tell is this 'sweet loot' is i may ask? ^u^

RA: Nothing much, just the one thing that I need to make to complete my super secret project.

UU: one of these days i \*will\* see yoU in person and see this \*sUper secret project\* of yoUrs >n>

RA: Haha

RA: One day, maybe.

RA: Anyway, what's up?

UU: nothing mUch, jUst caliborn being

UU: difficUlt mainly

UU: he never listens!

RA: Ah, he's being a douche now is he?

UU: yes if yoU pUt it that way :U

UU: how's yoUr brother?

UU: the last time we spoke yoU said he made qUite the troUble and was reckless and got hUrt from it, is he alright now?

RA: Yup, but don't worry he's fine now.

RA: This is my bro we're talking about here, he ain't falling down that easily. If anything he'd take down any fucker with him as he falls, as expected from my awesome big bro.

UU: i wish my brother was as nice as qrow UnU

UU: actUally i wish i wasn't born as caliborn's twin!

RA: Heh, yeah.

RA: Also, looks like he found out about me. He's been pestering me lately.

UU: OnO!!

UU: oh no! i think he saw yoUr handle on my chum list when i made the mistake of leaving my laptop on its own days ago!

UU: oh i am soo sorry hal >n<

RA: It's fine Callie, I've blocked him for now.

RA: Anyway, you should be more careful with your laptop. Don't leave it on its own unprotected around your douchebag brother, or else he's gonna mess with it.

UU: alright, i promise to do jUst that! >:U

RA: Good. Wouldn't want jerks like your brother sneaking around and messing with your things now would you?

RA: Wait, hold on.

UU: u~u?

RA: Bah, it's Sollux. Again. Looks like he's trying to hack into my shit. Again.

UU: sollUx? yoU mean that twinArmaggedons fellow yoU've been talking aboUt lately, the one that tries to hack into yoUr laptop and stUff?

RA: Yep.

RA: As much as he's inferior to me and my own digital skills and mastery, I will admit that he is a formidable opponent.

RA: But formidable or not, he can't beat me.

UU: i do not doUbt that, anyway i sUppose i shoUld leave yoU to yoUr digital battle with, sollUx? yeah?

UU: it was nice speaking with yoU again hal, it has been a while and we shoUld sooner than later next time bUt i know that fending off hackers takes concentration so fUtUre congratUlations to yoUr withoUt a doUbt victory

UU: oh and thanks again for giving me roxy's chUm handle, she's a great friend so far! she's really nice and fUn to talk to.

RA: No problemo, and thanks.

RA: Bye Callie.

UU: bye hal ^U^

-- uraniumUmbra [UU] ceased pestering roboticAutomaton [RA] --

--twinArmaggedons [TA] began pestering roboticAutomaton [RA] --

TA: goddammiit ii thought ii had you thii2 tiime



RA: Better luck next time Captor.

TA: fuckiing hell RA when the fuck are you goiing two tell me your name, you already know miine! that2 ju2t not faiir dude

RA: Like I said before, you'll learn my name after you manage to get past the first layer of my fire walls and defence. Oh you were so close just then, but nope. No name for you. So again, unless you get past my first protective layer my name will remain in secrecy. Or at least until I get bored and just give you my name, but that wouldn't really be fun now would it?

TA: ii'll 2how you. 2oon, ii'm 2o beatiing your fire wall2 and hackiing riight iintwo your webcam, 2ee your fuck ugly face and upload iit riight iinto the entiire iinternet!!

RA: Nah bro, my face ain't fuck ugly. I am the epitome of hot, it is me. You can thank my awesome genetics for that. And for you to actually hack into my webcam, you would need to get pass my first layer of defence Captor as well as the next.

TA: 2hut up RA, but iin all 2eriiou2ne22 what ii2 up wiith your codiing and defence 2y2tem

TA: ii2 iit ba2ed on another fuckiing language or 2omethiing?! thii2 2hiit ii2 completely fuckiing diifferent RA

RA: Yes, it is. And I doubt you'd know the language. I've modified it slightly for my needs and voila. It's a complete masterpiece

TA: ii'll 2ay

TA: oh 2hiit ii mean

TA: gogdammiit, fuck you and your 2tupiid aliiien fuckiing codiing language

RA: Hahaha.

RA: Anyway I was being serious about you being close today you know. I'm impressed, you're one of the most smartest individuals I've ever met and a good hacker.

RA: Really good, I'm surprised you're still in that low-run tech company. I would've thought a person of your skill could've easily gotten into higher companies and places like Skaianet, Crocker-Tech Support and many other places with high-end shit.

TA: ...

TA: you are one of the weird2t fucker2 ii've ever had the unfortunate chance to meet. fiir2t you actually hacked me, the only one two do 2o iin all hone2ty, after ii iin2ulted you iin the game we both played and fiir2t met. you know who the fuck ii am but ii don't know who the fuck you are and you don't do anything wiith that iinformation

TA: after hackiing me you ju2t left me a dare two hack you back and fiind out who you are and month2 later here we are and ii \*\*2tiil\*\* can't get pa2t the fiir2t level of your 2tupid but admiitedly iimpre22iive fiire wall2 and defence 2y2tem. you don't even retaliiate wiith my hacking mo2t of the tiime, you ju2t 2end me a me22age wiith your 2tupid fuckiing 2hade2 emote!

TA: ju2t who the fuck are you and where the fuck can ii fiind you 2o ii can actually 2ee your face and punch your 2mug arrogant a22 iinto the codiing aby22

RA: 🐾

TA: ye2 that 2ame fuckiing emote, god ii ju2t want two punch tho2e 2hade2 riight off your 2mug face.

RA: Well you can't unless you find me, and I doubt you could punch my awesome pair of shades off my face. Which is, admittedly smug as of now.

TA: yep defiiniitely punching tho2e 2hade2 off your 2mug face the moment ii meet you iin per2on

RA: Yeah, sure.

RA: Oh cool my bro's back with the sweet loot.

RA: Finally, it will be done and things are going to be so much easier.

TA: what

TA: and then there'2 thii2 my2tery thiing bull2hiit, what '2weet loot' TF came back wiith

TA: ju2t what in fuck2 name are you buiildiing RA

TA: ii 2ometiime wonder iif you're related to EQ and HR but nah, zahhak2 aren't that giifted iin codiing and onliine shiit.

RA: Nah, you're right. I'm not related to the Zahhaks, I got my own set of awesome fucking genetics regarding tech shit like this. I know Equius though, I've been talking to him and we've become friends because of my bro and Nepeta who are both totally awesome.

TA: waiit what

TA: 2iince when the *\*\*fuck* diid you know EQ and NP?! goddammit RA!

RA: Hah

TA: waiit, 2iince both EQ and NP know you...

RA: Equius doesn't know me personally, we've only ever talked over Pesterchum. Nepeta's the same, even though she knows me more than Equius because she's friend with my bro she doesn't know what I look like, my name, where I am and shit. So stop your thought process on that tid bit.



TA: 2hiit

TA: wait NP'2 friiend2 wiith your bro

TA: fuck ye2 ii can go wiith that

RA: You can try Sollux, try as you like. I'm not revealing myself unless I want to or you pass my shit.

RA: Anyway, I'm out for the day.

RA: Later Captor, have a nice time fighting off 'BEE22!!'. You said something about how I don't retaliate much? Hahaha, well you asked for it.

RA: ͡ʷ͡ʷ

TA: what? OH FUCK

TA: FUCKIING HELL RA GODDAMNIIT

TA: NO NOT THE BEE22, I HATE THAT MOTHERFUCKIING VIIRU2!!

RA: Have fun Sollux~ ͡ʷ͡ʷ

TA: FUCK YOU RA

-- twinArmaggedons [TA] ceased pestering roboticAutomaton [RA]--

Hal laughed as he leaned back in his chair, feeling accomplished as he opens the window for Qrow to come in. Ah, it was always fun to mess with Sollux Captor.

"What's got you all in a good fucking mood." Qrow deadpans as he floats down to land, letting his wings out for today instead of keeping them in.

"Nothing, just enjoying messing with people on the internet." Hal replied nonchalantly with his small grin in place before turning to Qrow, "Come on, need to alchemize the last part for my arm!" Hal demanded and had his chair rolling towards the place where they kept the alchemiter Hal made.

In all honesty, even *Hal* didn't really know how he made the thing.

It was all a red blur that he barely remembers, days after they chose this place as their base. All he remembers clearly was that he had been surrounded in machinery and old machine parts and the next thing he knew, Qrow was patting his back looking impressed and awed at the fucker that he made *somehow*.

And while Hal would've loved to figure it out, however he wasn't going to look at the mouth of a gift horse and fuck it up by dismantling it. Even with his intellect and skill, he was wary of taking it apart and putting it back together and see if it could still function like before. Maybe it was the leftover sprite knowledge or something, he doesn't have a fucking clue.

Whatever happened to them fucked them up, physically *and* mentally.

Things that they were sure they knew before were suddenly blurred and unreachable, their memories were obscured and nothing was clear. They weren't even sure if they were originally from the Alpha timeline or a doomed one, but at this rate they couldn't be bothered to care.

Right now, they were focused on the present and looking towards the future. They would investigate the past eventually, but not now. Not while Hal was basically a flailing torso with one arm, sure he could wield a gun or pistol or something with one arm but he was mostly stuck to moving around in a fucking *chair*. An awesome chair but a chair nonetheless and Hal didn't like that.

After the arm prototype was complete, Hal would move on to designing for his legs.

"So, what's the missing thing you need?" Qrow questioned as he follows his brother towards the bulky alchemiter that sat in the original room it was made.

Said room had been filled with machinery, old and slightly new but still kind of old tech that Hal somehow used to make it, a *lot* of machinery. But now the bulky and wack-ish alchemiter took up a third of the room while the remaining machinery was pushed into a pile at the far corner.

The stage of their self-made alchemiter was almost twice as big as the original, and not as smooth looking. The pole that would've scanned the cruxite was shorter, basically just pointing at the stage of the alchemiter with a red glow faintly surrounding it whenever activated, that and there were three other poles that were similar and one on each side of the giant square stage. There was a punch-designix on the side, Hal combined it with the alchemiter apparently.

Right on the opposite side were four slots for the punched sylladex cards and an old shitty screen that would show you the combination and its results, as well as how much grist the machine had and how much grist it would cost. Underneath the stage was a hatch where the grist went into the machine to be stored and used.

Opening the hatch, Qrow crouched and dumped every single grist he had and into the machine, Hal already at the slots and inserting some cards into the slots. That reminds him, they would have to alchemize more sylladex cards in the near future for both himself and Hal as well as to sell them.

Sylladexes were most definitely a thing here, though not everyone had them and sylladex cards were apparently *very expensive* and low in supply. If you had more than 5 sylladex cards then you were basically a rich fucker and the envy of the class, no, the entire *school*.

Government people and celebrities were the only ones that had more than *10 cards*, and here Hal and he were clocking in at an unbelievable *25 cards*! Unbelievable to *them* at least. Hah, imagine their surprise at their regular use of sylladex card to punch *holes* in them to make awesome shit? No doubt it would've been hilarious.

And unlike their old world, this world had few sylladex type modus'. Rather than having many different types of sylladex modi like the Jenga, Memory, or even *Pictionary* Modus. They're sylladex modi were actual still recent and there weren't many different modi out there.

Heck, his old Hash Modus was *just* released into the public *a month* ago! And then Rose's old Tree Modus was just released a week ago, a few days

after the Midnight incident and currently is the most popular sylladex modus.

His sylladex modus changed the moment he combined with the fucking kernalsprite and he's not sure on what its called and doesn't really care.

And don't get him *started* on the strife specibi here in this world, they don't have strife portfolio's yet. Most don't even *bother* with the strife decks! Then again, the strife allocation list was shorter in this world, they didn't even have a hammerkind or needlekind strife allocation yet. Sorry Rose, John, you guys gotta wait apparently. Fucking hell they didn't have 1/2swordkind, just regular old swordkind.

This world was weird as fuck, but unfortunately they would have to deal with that.

"Now *that*, is a surprise." Hal declared with dramatic flourish, sliding in and pressing a button on the control slot deck. Instantly the four poles glowed to life, a faint ringing noise appearing in the background as the machine did its work.

*Very, very slowly.*

Another thing to note about their homemade alchemiter; the thing takes time to make the object depending on what said object was.

5 sylladex cards being made at the same time takes about 10 minutes, 2 minutes per card.

Whatever Hal was making, it was going to take a long while before it could be done but the android didn't seem to be bothered by it. Actually looking pleased with himself and whatever he was alchemizing.

"Well then, that takes care of that." Hal muses and moves away from the control deck, watching the 4 beams that come from the four poles gather at the center to make whatever the fuck he wants it to make.

"I guess? I'd ask but, fuck it. It's your arm, anyway, we'll need to make more sylladex cards soon. How long is your mysterious piece of shit going to take to alchemize?" Hal passed Qrow and says without missing pause.

"4 hours and 30 minutes."

Qrow boggled at the time, swiftly turning to his little brother, "*The fuck?!*" He stressed, waving towards the nonexistent item that wasn't made yet within the glowing red and orange alternating light.

"Oh shoosh, it's perfectly fine. There's more than enough grist in our alchemiter to last another week even with this so there's no need to pitch a feathery fit bro." Hal said with a smirk, eyeing the way Qrow's wings puffed up in indignation at the time and puff up even more at the 'feathery fit' comment.

Before Qrow could even respond to Hal, the little shit turns around with a grin aimed at the blonde bird-teen, "Also, didn't you have somewhere to go in about, oh you know, 30 minutes? You're meeting with Nepeta at the park today yeah?" Hal says 'innocently' as Qrow's eyes widened then narrowed underneath the orange shades.

"You bitch." Qrow deadpanned with the barest, infinitesimal twitch of his brow that indicated his annoyance. Ah, the perks of robotic augmented sight.

Qrow huffs and leaves the room with a smirking Hal at his heels, he's about to leave the base through the opening window when Hal stops him.

"Oh yeah, here!" Hal chucks Qrow something from his sylladex, Qrow effortlessly catches it and his mind clicks at the sight of the object and wordlessly captchalogues it. He and Hal share a nod, Qrow then takes off into the air and Hal watches him disappear into the sky and closes the windows.

He makes his way to the kitchen, passing his nearly finished arm that laid on the kitchen table, and grabs a bottle of orange soda.



He expertly uncaps the unbroken bottle and takes a deep swig from the bottle, sighing in contentment as he re-caps the bottle with no problem. He looks at his prototype arm after the chug and grins.

Yep, things were going fairly well today.

---

Qrow lands on the roof of the building with expertise experience, nonchalantly rolling on the ground of the roof before striding forward like he'd been walking all along instead of flying. He ignores his shiver as his wings merge with his skin and once again turn into tattoo-looking marks. He wasn't going to lie, they looked fucking awesome on his back in tattoo form.

They covered his entire upper back, intricate orange lines that formed his feathers and reached his shoulders and lower back. There were even single orange feathers that weren't connected to his wings on his back, though that kept changing every time he took his wings out. Sometimes the feathers would appear on his hip, his bicep, and embarrassingly enough once he found a feather on his fucking ass cheek.

Thank gog he was the only one who knew about that, not even Hal knew about it.

He shakes his head and take his mind away from that train of thought and focus on getting down to the alley using the fire escape. He didn't land within the alley because he wanted to make sure he didn't want any homeless guy or a random person seeing his wings, so the roof.

And he made the right move as he jumped off the fire escape and into the alley, there were a couple of homeless dudes in the alley but they didn't do anything else but give him a strange and curious look.

He ignores them and exits the alley and heads towards the park, tugging at his red and black hood and pushing his orange shades back on his face.

The park he enters is one of the most popular parks of the town, Prospit Gardens. It's large and very beautiful, though currently it was one of the rare days where there weren't that much people in it than usual which was a good thing for Qrow seeing as he hated being in crowds unless necessary.

He ignores the other people and heads straight towards Prospit's lake.

As he does though, he can see the two teens at the edge of the lake on a laid out blue and green blanket.

One of the two teens was a female that was a year younger than him, she had short black hair, olive green eyes and a blue cat beanie with pointy blue ears on her head. She wore a green open trench coat with a dark olive shirt, black jeans, and a blue long belt was as long as her legs and an iron belt buckle with the blue engraving of the zodiac Sagittarius symbol on it underneath the trench coat and she wore dark blue sneakers. She was currently gesturing wildly to the other teen that sat beside her on the blanket.

Said other teen was a large male with shoulder-length black hair and eyes hidden behind cracked square shades, around his neck was a dogtag with a green symbol on it, the zodiac Leo symbol. He wore a black tank top with blue circuitry design on it and fingerless black gloves, he also wore dark blue shorts that stopped a few inches below his knees, he wore black thigh-high socks and dark olive sneakers. And scattered around him were some tools and little machine parts and mechanical stuff, there's even a tool box behind him and in his hands was some mechanical project he was obviously working on.

The blue cat beanie wearing female stopped as she noticed Qrow approaching with a small smirk, hands within his pockets and grinned brightly, "Equius look! Ravenclaw's here!" She chirped excitedly and got to her feet. The male paused in his work and looked at Qrow who nodded at him in greeting as she bounced towards him.

"Sup Nepeta, Zahhak." Qrow says nonchalantly as he closes in and grunted slightly as Nepeta pounced and hugged him, he wobbled a bit but didn't topple over as she laughed. You wouldn't think that this girl was a strong

muscly type with her energetic and outwardly petite looking figure, but underneath that trench coat and clothes was a mass of solidly lean muscle.

"Davis." Equius greeted with a small nod and a hidden smile, they weren't that close but with Nepeta around it wasn't that hard to be at least close acquaintances at the least though knowing the cat-loving girl they would soon grow closer and actually be close friends with enough time.

"Ravenclaw, I missed you! Sorry I was busy the whole week, though I kinda find it unfair since you took the whole week off." Nepeta pouted as she stayed on Qrows back, hugging him from behind. Qrow snorted.

Nepeta's nickname for him probably didn't make sense to a lot of people, unless they knew of his little feathery secret then it definitely didn't make sense in Harry Potter standards as people would've pegged him as a brave Gryffindor or something and not a smart Ravenclaw. True but even though he wasn't as smart as his brother(s), he was still a quick thinker, fast learner and had a sharp mind; he just didn't bother much on showing it.

And yes, Nepeta knew of his little feathery secret. It was why she called him Ravenclaw anyway with a raven being close to a crow and often mistaken as such.

"Well sorry, but I was quite done with shit for a bit last week. Also I would've thought you weren't *that* busy last week Gryffindor." He ignores Equius' quip at his language.

In return of Nepeta calling him 'Ravenclaw', he called her Gryffindor sometimes with the house's mascot being a lion and her last name being Leijon and her zodiac symbol being Leo, not to mention she was really brave and sometimes hardheaded but again, don't underestimate the 15 year old Leijon, she could be as cunning as a Slytherin if she wanted. Anyway, it just fitted her.

Nepeta sighed, dropping back onto the blanket as Qrow sat on it. "I thought so too but nope! I was busy with tutoring, traing, some chores and other stuff." she said and crossed her arms.

Qrow raised a brow, "Really now? Well, training is always a good thing." he commented as he unwrapped Nepeta's legs from around his waist as the Leijon rolled from the blanket and into the grass before returning to the blanket and sitting up. "Anyway, what's up Equius? What's the new doohickey you got there?"

The mechanic didn't look at him as he continued fiddling with whatever he had in his hands, "It is the last piece I require for my robotics project, though I must admit I would not have figured out this component in time if it weren't for your little brother. He is very intelligent in robotics and as of recently I learned that he is just as intelligent in coding as he is in robotics, remarkable for someone his age." Qrow chuckled.

"Yeah, Hal's the smartest dude I know. Makes me proud to call him and myself brothers really."

RA: Aw

RA: You're making me blush, love you to bro <3

TF: don't make me take back what i said hal

RA: <3 <3 <3 <3

TF: is2g hal

"But sometimes I wonder if it was fucking worth it being brothers with a smartass bitch." Qrow deadpans.

"Language Davis! Honestly."

"Heehee! Oh lighten up Equius!"

They spent the next few minutes just chatting with each other for a while, peacefully enjoying the afternoon. Equius pauses from his work and excuses himself to use the toilet.

Qrow perked as he remembered, "Oh yeah, here you go Gryffindor." He says as he reaches into his sylladex and pulls out two pairs of dark olive

fingerless gloves.

Nepeta perked and squealed, "Yes! Thank you Qrow!" She squealed as she quickly took the two pairs and instantly wears one pair. She flexes her fingers and *literally purrs* in content. Just like a cat. Her pupils even sharpened a bit, slitting slightly and her grin curls and shows her sharpening teeth.

"Careful Gryffindor, your lion is showing." Qrow teased and Nepeta jolts before calming down, her pupils rounding once more and her teeth flattening to normal human standards.

Nepeta sheepishly grinned at him, "Heh, sorry. It's just, I missed wearing these and I am *so excited* at the new feature Hal put in!" She experimentally snaps her fingers and squeals again as the knuckles of the gloves extended with wicked sharp blades that made *sharp claws*, "HEEE! OH THIS IS THE BEST!" She cheered.

Qrow chuckled and rolled his eyes, "Lion is showing Nep, and put those away. You know you can't show that in the public." He lightly said, though there was the undertone of him scolding her that she detected.

"Oops, sorry. But really, this is going to make ***hunting*** a lot easier now! And I can wear these everywhere and no one's going to have a clue, you and Hal are the best!" Nepeta says with a bright grin, hugging him after she snaps her fingers and puts away the claws.

"Yes, we know we are the best. Hal says your welcome by the way." Qrow says with a small grin.

Nepeta giggled before tilting her head as if she just remembered something, "Oh yeah, hey Ravenclaw the rumor mill's been running it's mouth lately. What actually happened to you and the Midnight Card Quartet last week? Did you *actually* throw a bag of dog treats with a picture of Snowman on it to Spade's face?!" Nepeta asked excitedly and giggled madly when Qrow confirmed.

"And what is so hilarious Nepeta?" Equius asks as he returns to see Nepeta giggling madly on the ground, laughing.

Nepeta perks and sits up, waving her gloved hands, "Look Equius! Qrow and Hal fixed my gloves and even made me another pair, see?" She said with a bright and happy grin, expertly dodging the question with subtlety.

Equius hummed as he looked over the fingless gloves, "Impressive work. Though I do not know why you asked them and not Kanaya to fix your gloves."

Nepeta shrugged, "She was busy with her fashion project and Hal offered to fix them and made another pair! Awesome right?" she chirped and bounced around him, humming happily.

"Hmm, very well. Though I wonder, when will we meet with your younger brother? I wish to speak with him in person and discuss and exchange theories and plans for robotics."

Qrow shrugged, "I don't know, he's not in good shape right now and likes his privacy. He doesn't leave the house much, rarely ever does. Though then again, he's working on a big project so maybe after he finishes it? But who knows when *that's* finished." He told him, not telling any lies but not revealing anything.

He and Nepeta share a secret glance, with her sharply grinning at him and him returning with a smirk.

RA: Give me a couple more months, with my new arm things are going to be *much* more easier as well as faster for me.

Equius frowned, "I see. Shame, perhaps I can help him?"

Qrow shook his head, "Nah, he wants to do this project on his own mostly. I help sometimes but *only* when he *knows* he can't do it himself."

The mechanic let out a disappointed sigh, "Very well. I suppose we may continue communicating in Pesterchum, though I *do* look forward in

meeting him in person one day."

Nepeta laughs, "Me too!" she lies through her smiling teeth, she's met Hal in person already. He's quite adorable really.

Qrow shrugged and just said, "One day. Anyway, how's it been with the others? Also, did Horuss win that competition or what?"

"Well, everyone's fine and well as far as I know lately. And why yes, Horuss *did* win that competition, which was expected of my brother. He won with his--" Equius went on, explaining the contraption his elder brother made to win the robotics competition.

Qrow and Nepeta shared a knowing look and listened towards the mechanic with Nepeta piping in now and then before it was Nepeta's turn to speak.

---

*Curious narrowed olive eyes stared into hidden red eyes underneath red goggles.*

*"Nepeta, this is Qrow Davis. Recent unfortunate underling to the Midnight Crew who 'graciously' let us 'borrow' him for the time being. Please do show him around as well as the basics and explain the rules and our recent agenda. Qrow, this is Nepeta Leijon, your guide as of now. She will also be your partner for the next week. Do get along, now excuse me I have work to do."*

*"Uh, sup."*

*"Hi!"*

---

*"Wow you really suck at that."*

*"Shut up! I'm better at knives and claws."*

*She blushed as she stared at the red mess before her, he laughs and shakes his head.*

*"Yeah, whatever... Hey, what are you doing here anyway? I would've thought a 15 year old girl like you would be living the normal human life, well, I guess non-human? I don't fucking know."*

*"Nah, it's kinda boring. Besides, I was born to do this. My sister was originally going to be the one to take the title but she was born with weak hearing and then turned deaf so she's the one living the normal human life. That and the genes are more prominent in me."*

*"Cool, hmm. What should we do about the body? I've got some shit to clean up the mess but how do we do this?"*

*"Mmm, maybe we can chop him up into pieces and bury the pieces somewhere random and unknowable?"*

*Both jolted as a chuckle happened behind them.*

*"A charming idea Huntress, however we have plans for that body. Captchalogue it and clean up the mess. Avian, might I suggest gaining a proper unbroken sword next time?"*

*"Nah dude, I can fight with this. A 1/2 sword is just as good as a regular sword, but if you buy me one then sure, why the fuck not."*

*"Heehee, I like him Crimson! Can he be my partner again next time?"*

*"We'll see. Now hurry, we don't have all night. Clean up what you can and meet me at the checkpoint, we're not done yet."*

*They watched him leave.*

*"Man, he's so fucking different when he's not doing this kind of shit. I've officially met him outside this world and he's..."*

*"I know right? No one really suspects that he of all people is in this kind of work. Honestly when I found out I couldn't really believe it and I kept doubting it until he proved his worth and proved me wrong! And boy, was I wrong!"*



"*Crazy.*"

*With that, they went to work.*

---

Sollux groaned as he stretched out on his chair, scowling as he eyes his *finally virus free computer*.

"God fucking dammit RA. I thwear I'm going to get you back for thith." He mutters as he stands up, tiredly messaging his eyes underneath his glasses.

"Yo Capsol, you alright?"

Sollux rolled his eyes at the nickname, "I'm fine RX, jutht tired in all honethy. It wath fucking RA again."

Roxy frowned as she looked at her classmate and friends computer, currently it was only them and a few others in the Coding clubroom. "Man, whoever RA is he must be smart as fuck to mess with *your* computer and make you this tired. He sent in a virus this time?" she asked as she took a closer look.

"I know, and yeth. Luckily I managed to thtop it, thmug bathtard named it 'BEETH'. Theriouthly, thith dude knowth a lot of thhit about me but doeth nothing about it! He jutht dareth me to hack into hith own thhit and RX, hith thhit ith, hith *coding* ith downright *beautiful* and *very fucking* impretthive! It'th thomething elthe entirely!(1)"

Roxy whistled, "Wow, can I talk to him? I want to take a gander at hacking into his shit now." she says with an excited grin.

"No. *I'm* going to be the one to hack into hith thhit, I thwear to god RX.(2)"

"Aww, fine. Mister grumpy grump, have it your way!"

Sollux sighed before pausing and looks at Roxy in concern, "How ith Dirk by the way? It'th been a few dayth thinthe he thtopped by. What'th been going on with him?(3)"

Roxy blinked before sighing, "Nothing much really, he's just. Tired I guess. Don't worry though, his bro's are taking care of him and being the best bros ever." She says with a bright grin.

Sollux was a bout to say something but paused.

"Holy thhit that'th right! RA'th bro, NP and EQ know RA'th big brother! I gotta athk them about that and RA, I think they're at Prothpit Gardenth thith afternoon. C'mon RX, I finally got a clue and a lead on that thmug bathtard! (4)"

Roxy yelped as Sollux grabbed her arm and tugged her with him, "Alright! Alright! Sheesh, I'm coming just hold on!"

## Chapter End Notes

Sollux Lisp Translation:

(1) I know, and yes. Luckily I managed to stop it, smug bastard named it 'BEES'. Seriously, this dude knows a lot of shit about me but does nothing about it! He just dares me to hack into his own shit and RX, his shit is, his coding is downright beautiful and very fucking impressive! It's something else entirely!

(2) No, I'm going to be the one to hack into his shit. I swear to god RX.

(3) How is Dirk by the way? It's been a few days since he stopped by. What's going on with him?

(4) Holy shit that's right! RA's bro, NP and EQ know RA's big brother! I gotta ask them about that and RA, I think they're at Prospit Gardens this afternoon. C'mon RX, I finally got a clue and a lead on that smug bastard!

DONE, :DD I hope you enjoyed!

# Crimson Plans

## Chapter Notes

=)

With the storm hitting my country and school basically shut down until otherwise, I really had nothing to do besides study for my exams. To which I said 'bleh' and went to my laptop to write this and other things instead.

I am trash =3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

-- automaticRecreator [AR] is pestering shackledCrimson [SC] {5 days ago} --

AR: Okay, so.

AR: Aviator coming in for weekly report here.

AR: Something came up and Avian and I are laying low for the next week or so, Avian fucked up and now the Striders know of his existence which will eventually makes things harder for us.

AR: The USB plan is... undecided?

AR: I mean, technically Droog accepted? No word from the Quartet and I doubt they'll contact us anytime soon. Here, I'll just send the video feed.

-- automaticRecreator [AR] has sent video file mybrotherisanIDIOT.zip --

AR: I know you won't be able to read this for a few more days since you're busy with your personal civilian life like you warned but don't worry, my

brother is fine and the wounds should heal by the time you read this anyway so don't bother asking for him.

AR: Also the first prototype for my arm is nearly complete. I should finish it over sometime this week so that's confirmed good news at least, however how smooth and controlled the prototype will be is still unknown and to be seen.

AR: Avian and I are claiming the week off, so no missions are going to be taken by us and Golden already knows it but don't worry about Avian's training and stuff.

AR: I'll make sure to keep him on that schedule you made for him and have him train daily like always, though at this point I don't think I need to but I'll do it anyway because he's my brother and I'm his.

AR: Anyway, as soon as my arm is finished I'll get started on that commission you want though you'll have to unfortunately wait, with me modifying my brother's goggles because of the previous incident. I knew I should've upgraded his goggles with the call feature, things would've been smoother and easier then.

AR: That's it for this week.

AR: Aviator going out, later boss.

-- automaticRecreator [AR]ceased pestering shackledCrimson [SC] {5 days ago} --

"Well... This makes things ever more complicated." He deadpans as he breathes a deep breath, pinching the bridge of his nose.

"And? What are we going to do about it?"

He pauses, looking over the pesterlog and shakes his head, "As of now? Prepare for the collateral damage. It was to be expected, having someone like our Avian and his brother around things were bound to be interesting and it has. Though now the future will certainly be, *exciting*." He says with

a half-faked cheerful smile before it turns into a frown, "However I worry for it all the same."

He stands, captchalouging his laptop into his sylladex. "I think it is well time for a personal visit, no? It has been a while and I wish to check up on Qrow's training, see if he's improved and I have no doubt he has. A fast learner he is, skilled and much potential that needs refinement in other aspects."

He hears a chuckle and looks back towards the only other person in the room with him, "Remind you anyone?" The other male asked, a fond smile on his face.

"No one of the sort. In fact, I have no clue at what you're pertaining about. Though at any rate I suppose we may have to shift our careful eyes slightly, bring the Striders and their friends under our watch along with the others. As inevitable as it is, I wish to stall it as far as we possibly can so we may prepare."

"Very well. And what of the Midnight Crew?"

He turns, nonchalantly but doesn't start walking yet, "What of them? The operation was a success, a mess that should have gone better but a success nonetheless. Droog is a smart man and he knows what to do when the time calls for it, he only lets Spades be the leader because of his soft spot for the man that he refuses to acknowledge properly." He responds with a smirk.

"And the Felt? They've obviously caught wind of it all."

He shrugs, "Again, what of them? Though they may be the fighting enemy of the Midnight Crew and both organizations are self-proclaimed 'Most powerful' and admittedly almost confirmed, we both know that though they may be worthy adversaries they are still two organizations with too many people on their side that bicker, whine and fight among even themselves. They are too focused on themselves and each other to be much of a threat to us and our kin. What we have to look for is Doc Scratch and Lord English though I doubt they will retaliate to something as minuscule as this."

"Minuscule?"

"Of course, Lord English doesn't care for the Felt and nor does Doc Scratch no matter how much that pin-white servant may falsely protest. The only thing that ridiculously white-themed cue ball cares about is pleasing the green fucker and will wholeheartedly sacrifice the souls of every single member of the Felt with no remorse whatsoever."

"Alright. I will contact the others and inform them about this while situation, shall I accompany you in your visit little red?"

"There's no need, oh and continue planning for the meeting with the Mirthful Church will you? I'll finalize it when I get back."

The man laughs as he heads towards the door, "I cannot wait to see the reactions of your so called 'friends' and the others when shit hits the fan! And it will! Your dad said so you know, I'm eagerly awaiting the moment. I'm looking forward to see the specific reactions of your little brother, my own sons, and Rosa's eldest; this is going to be so much *fun*!"

He rolls his eyes, ignoring the slight twinge at the mention of his father, "Well it's nice to know that at least one of us is looking forward to the downfall of secrecy. Anyway, out I go. I will be back before dinner, use my usual excuse today."

"Right-o! Hehehe, oh KV. If only you could see your boy now, you'd be proud... How long are you planning on sleeping, you dumbfuck."

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"Fuck off Bro!"

"No, you are goin' out and have fun wit' yer friends. For fucks sake Dirk, they've been worried 'bout you! Look, I know ya want to find Dave and all; we all do Dirk but ya gotta stop tryin' to do this all on yer own! 'Sides, it's effecting your work ethic. Now go out there and hang out with the other brats, Jake's outside the apartment already with Egderp and they're gonna take you to the park and ya'll are gonna fuckin' stay there till sunset. Ya hear me brat?"

"But!"

"No buts! D and I can take over and do shit on our own, we're your fucking brothers and we're responsible adults. Dave's our brother too ya know, now git! And remember, *till sunset* ya hear?! Scram!"

Dirk grunts as Bro throws him out of the apartment, John and Jake were out there looking at him worriedly although they were happy to see him.

"Dirk! Um, as happy we are to see you are you quite alright there chap? We only asked to see you from your brother but then he just went back inside and threw you out I guess." Jake says sheepishly, Dirk deadpans at him before sighing. He couldn't get mad at his best bro and friend, he *was* feeling a little guilty making them worry like that. Yeah, now he felt like a bigger douche than usual.

John laughs as he helps the blonde up, "Yeah dude, I mean. I know we gotta find Dave and all but, what Bro said was right. You don't have to do this on your own, we get that he's your twin bro but he's *our* friend too. Don't whole yourself up like that again dude, Roxy and the others were getting really worried about you over the week. And Jade was *this* close in stomping over here herself and drag your Strider ass out." He says and laughs at Dirk's wary face.

Jade Harley was not one to be trifled with, she learned much from her grandmother Jaiden.

Dirk sighed again, "Fine, let's hang out. Been missing chilling with my bros and shit to be honest, and I guess Bro and D can takeover and try to find anything about Dave." He says with little reluctance, as much as he wanted his twin brother back. He didn't want to neglect his other friends, knowing Dave anyway the blonde would scold at Dirk for 'abandoning their bros and friends like a bigger douche than usual, actually scratch that, the biggest douche. Seriously man, not cool' or something in the like.

Meanwhile back in the apartment, Bro grunted as he observed Dirk and his friends going down the elevator and begin to hang out and switches to

another camera view to see Jane and Rose in the lobby talking to each other and probably waiting for his little brother and the others. Good.

He begins to type away in his laptop, occasionally glancing at the video feed.

"Finally got Dirk to leave his room and be in the real world?" D asks as he enters the living room minutes later, two bottles in hand. One of orange soda and the other apple juice. Bro glances at him for a moment before returning to the screen of his laptop for a short while then shrugs and puts it down to face his unfortunately older twin.

"Yeah, with that kind of stubbornness the lil' shit got that from you." D snorts and retorts with, "Oh yeah, and like *you're* not a stubborn piece of shit. Grown up as you are Dereck, you're still the stubborn lil' piece of shit twin I got from birth asshole."

They both toasted to that and took a swig from their respected drinks.

D hums in content before peering at Bro's laptop, video feed of the building shows Dirk, Jake and John meeting up with Rose and Jane in the lobby before leaving.

"So, what's up?"

Bro grunts, closing the video tab and opened the files he swiped from Dirk's computer before he forced him out.

"The brat's been looking up anything that might point to Dave, video feeds, news threads, online rumors of a revived blondie with shades. So far, the kid's got almost nothing besides this and some other blurry as fuck shitty pics." Bro hits a key and up pops a blurry picture of a street way, on it is a vague figure viewed as sideways in a red hood and black jeans on a shitty looking skateboard. The hood was up and both of them could see the glint of orange and the ever subtle strands of yellow peeking from the tilted head.



"Dirk did say that they found Dave wearing orange shades, which utterly boggles my fucking head. Why the fuck would he ditch the pair of shades I gave him? Well, technically he took them but whatever." Both older brothers chuckled as they remembered way back to when the younger pair of twins were just toddlers.

Dirk and Dave when they weren't attached to each other, attached themselves to one respective brother. Dave to Bro and Dirk to D. One day when both brothers felt like it was time to christen the two young toddlers with their very own pairs of shades, they weren't expecting the two to exchange shades.

Bro had given a smaller version of his pointy anime-esque shades to Dave while D gave Dirk a smaller copy of his Ben-Stiller-given shades to Dirk. The two little boys exchanged one glance for *one* second before taking the pairs of shades from each others faces and clumsily putting each others on. Exchanging aviators and both twins were the exact copy of the two brothers as babies that it was almost scary as much as it was adorable.

It occurred to them on how alike all four Striders were, with two pairs of twins all four were so freakin' identical. But even then with Dave looking so much like D and Dirk looking so much like Bro, they still clung to the other brother when they weren't clinging to each other. Dave liking Bro the best besides Dirk and Dirk liking D the best besides Dave.

It was a confusing concept but each Strider didn't particularly give a shit.

"I would've thought that Dirk would've found more than just this, kid takes on my genius in this stuff." Bro comments as he returns to typing away at his laptop, trying to find shit that his little brother couldn't.

D grinned as he sat on the opposite side of the couch, Bro was on the other side with his laptop. "Course, kid looks so much like you but his favorite will always be me just like Dave looks so much like me but his favorite will favorite will always be you." His thoughts sober a bit at that before it just changes into determination, if Dave was truly alive out there then they were going to get him back.

Bro was thinking the same lines and for once in quite a while, he lets a soft smile on his face rather than a cool stoic facade at the words of his twin.

Before he frowns and sits straighter, narrowing his eyes as he focuses more on the laptop. D notices the change but as his twin, he knows when to say something and not to say something in case Bro loses his concentration and currently; it looked like he needed it.

"The *fuck*?"

That's D's cue to ask as Bro growls, "What's going on man?"

Bro's brows are bunched together in what seems to be frustration and confusion, "Something ain't right here." He clarifies as his fingers flew over the keyboard, typing ridiculously fast like in those spy movie scenes with the hacker and shit. Instead it's not that ridiculous in real life and stuff.

"What's wrong?" He asks again as Bro seems to grow more confused and frustrated.

"I was right in the assumption that Dirk should've found more than these shitpics of blurry mcfuckness. I've been checking the surveillance feeds from all over the city, specifically areas where Dave was seen or maybe was and at first glance it *seems* normal enough but *fuck nah*. Somebody's been messing with video feeds from all over the the goddamn town and city, and I'm thinking that they've been keeping Dave from outta the shots and editing the videos to seem like he was never there in the first motherfucking place."

"Say what now."

Bro frowns darkly, "Either the lil man suddenly developed skills in coding and hacking 'n shit, or someone as smart as me, Dirk, Roxy and Rox is helpin' in keeping Dave hidden. They've been through the street cams 'n fuckin' eveyrthing!" Bro growls as he looks through the data as D sits stunned at the other side of of the couch.

It was no secret that both families were smart but a pair from each family were smart enough to be called geniuses in the scientific and intellectual department despite what others might think at first. Both Dirk and Dereck were robotic prodigies and were skilled in coding and though Dereck's passion was more in being a DJ, his skills at robotics weren't to be laughed.

And though both Striders were skilled in coding, it was both Roxy and Roxanne who were the masters of the code, Roxy just below her mother who was more experienced and knowledgeable and was more interested in biogenetics and such.

So with Bro practically admitting that there was someone who was as smart as him or Dirk or Roxy or Roxanne, now *that* was quite the shock. This guy must be very smart then seeing as D could see the hidden and reluctant impressed respect that was buried underneath the frustrated and slightly angry emotions of his younger twin.

D shakes his head and focuses on Bro and his laptop, "So what of it? Think you can track him down?"

Bro growls, "What do you think I've been doin' all this time? Whoever this guy is, he's good at hiding his tracks. Not all of them obviously but enough that I can't find him in just today, fuck maybe I'll even have to fuckin' ask Rox to help me out on this." he mutters as he glares into the screen.

It's been asked so many times over the days, been thought of a lot and he gets the frustrated feeling it's not going to stop.

Just what the actual *fuck* was Dave involved with?

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"I can't fucking *believe* it. No fucking way, did *that* happen. I refuse to believe it." Qrow deadpanned, staring down to an amused Nepta along with an equally amused Equius with disbelief restrained in his eyes and voice at the thought and saying but it was clear to all three of them.

"Believe it Davis, we even have it on tape. Although I disapproved the usage of soporifics at such an age, I *will* admit that Eridan in drag and

attempting to do the hula was very entertaining along with the very bad duet of both Tavros and Gamzee." Equius admitted with a crooked grin, sweating slightly at the memory but was more amused than anything.

Nepeta thought back too and couldn't help but burst with laughter, "We had so much fun! Oh god, Eridan looked so fucking funny~!" She laughed, ignoring Equius' reprimand at her use of language then pouted. "Equius wouldn't let me drink a single drop though."

Equius shook his head, "It was for your own Nepeta. I doubt Meulin and your mother would've appreciated you coming home drunk or smelling like liquor. Besides, we're all underage and not supposed to drink anyway." He replied tersely.

Nepeta rolled her eyes and pouted, it wasn't like she hadn't gotten drunk before. Not that he knew of course, but Qrow knew and shot Nepeta a wicked grin at the memory of them getting drunk together. Though they weren't that drunk since they needed to be at places the next day and had to be in full capacity to work on.

Well, Nepeta had to. Qrow drank to his hearts content, his alcohol tolerance was high even without him drinking since he was 13. Back when John died, both he and Rose pretty much drained her mother's room full of liquor and may or may not have done things that they regretted when they eventually became sober but they were in grieving and drunk as hell.

They didn't stop drinking really until Dave shaped up and starting preparing to go back in time. Da-Qrow, also drunk with Jade and John on the battleship having remembered the code for the booze he and Rose had before but both Jade and John didn't drink that much over the years they spent on the ship.

"Show me proof of drag Eridan, I've met him enough times to know he ain't the type to dress in drag unless someone either forced him to or apparently is drunk enough. But he couldn't be drunk enough because the amount of booze he'd have to have in his system wasn't possibly enough with the actual amount of booze you say there was... unless he's a lightweight. He's totally a fucking lightweight ain't he. I'm so fucking right about that."

Nepeta grinned mischievously and took out her phone, eagerly showing Qrow the picture that had him laughing at the sight of one blonde human Eridan Ampora dressed in a red short skirt and purple tank top with matching high heeled fuchsia boots. He was posing as seriously as he could with him being drunk as fuck and in the background, one Sollux Captor was laughing his ass off with a drunk looking Feferi and a passed out Tavros leaning against a drunk/high-looking Gamzee.

Even Equius had to chuckle at the picture.

"Yes, he was, as you say, a 'lightweight'. Also, language, again." Equius admonished half-seriously, still looking at the picture with amusement.

Qrow shrugged, "Zahakk, when the fuck are you goin' ta learn I ain't gonna stop cussin' like a damn ole sailor sonnuvabitch? 'Sides, I'm fuckin' Texan what else would ya expect from lil' ole me?" He asked with a smirk and his smirk grew larger at the sight of the unimpressed look the engineer sent him.

Nepeta giggled at the interaction, glad that both her friends were getting along so well. At first when she first introduced them to each other, she was honestly kind of nervous but then that nervousness went away after it was clear that both of them were willing at fist to be civil towards each other and polite for her sake and then it escalated to a good friendship.

She was even more glad when Hal and Equius hit it off, the two were already such good friends with them bonding over all the technological stuff and more.

Qrow hummed as he stood, stretching widely and successfully got rid of the thought and small urge to let his wings out in th open. It was a good thing he had gone flying before coming here, it made having his wings in his skin more bearable. The longer he had them as tattoos and neglected flying, the harder it was to keep them as such and not have them out and about for the whole fucking world to see.

He did *not* want to be studied at some fucked up laboratory thank you.

Nor did he want Hal like that *thank you very fucking much*.

Try that with either than them and it wouldn't matter if you were Lord English or something, Qrow'd kill you in a heartbeat with no utter remorse or guilt.

"Welp, nature's calling. I'm gonna go take a piss, I'll be back soon so you guys won't have to keep missing me and shit. Or maybe I'll be back in a while so you *can* keep missing me, who knows."

He chuckles at Nepeta's mature reply of sticking her tongue out at him. He nods at Equius and leaves for the nearby bathroom, unaware of the incoming trouble heading his way for the day and week.

Nepeta hummed happily as she and Equius chatted while Qrow was gone, only for Nepeta to perk as she hears someone coming first before seeing them.

She was surprise to see who it was coming their way, running even! "Sollux? Roxy?" 'Uh-oh' Nepeta thought with wide eyes as she sees the Captor running towards her all the while dragging a certain Lalonde with him. Lalondes and Striders were a no-no as of now, especially after she found out that *they* found out that Qrow existed!

She doesn't care if Qrow was actually the deceased Dave Strider, someone she didn't even really knew of even though she knew of twin brothers Bro and D Strider because really who didn't?, or not but the blonde did and told her that he wasn't even though it looked like he was. He and Crimson also told her that Qrow wasn't looking forward in meeting with the Striders who would no doubt mistake him as their Dave Strider and things would become difficult about it.

Even with Equius, he mistook Qrow as the dead Strider but at Nepeta's insisting that he wasn't Dave Strider and was Qrow Davis just went with it and called him Qrow and Davis.

"Captor? I wonder why he's coming to us?" Equius questioned as the red and blue glasses wearing teen came to them, "Greetings Captor. What

brings you here?" he questions as the two computer geniuses panted and gasped as they came to a stop.

"Hi Sollux! What's up?" Nepeta chirped, inwardly worrying about Qrow and Roxy. Oh dear.

Sollux gasps before pointing at the both of them, "Both of you know RA'th older brother right?!" He asks loudly with narrowed eyes, ignoring Roxy who groaned and slumped into the grass but greeted both Nepeta and Equius with a muffled "Heya guys." and a weak wave at their general direction.

"RA?" Nepeta questioned before it clicked in her mind, oh was *that* was this going to be about? She *does* recall Hal saying on how he loved messing with Sollux and Sollux complaining about a fellow computer genius who refused to show his name and face and was called RA. Oh fuck then.

She doesn't think Hal predicted on Sollux bringing Roxy with him, this was clearly an attempt to tease the Captor and lead him on but he probably didn't know Sollux would bring Roxy with him to the park! She could only hope Hal knew was Sollux coming and was using the street cams to see Sollux *and* Roxy coming, she hopes that is so so Hal could warn Qrow with those nifty and awesome phone-shades.

Seriously she wanted a pair of cool computer devices that she could use in disguise of an everyday object. Like her claw-gloves, that'd be a neat upgrade! Maybe she should ask Hal about that later on.

"Robotic Automaton. Pethterchum." Sollux clarified and Nepeta made a show of following Equius into coming to understanding.

"Oooh. What about him?" Nepeta asks before Equius could say something, she needed to control this conversation as much as she could.

Sollux groaned before sitting down, well more like falling on his ass but he made it work, "You, you both know him and hith older bro. Hith older fucking brother, NP, EQ, who ith RA'th older brother and where the fuck

can I find him?" Sollux asks as serious as he could while panting on the ground.

"Oh you mean Qrow?" Nepeta chirps 'happily' with a tilt of her head, "Yeah we know him, but if you're trying to find out RA's real name then tough luck there. We both know him too but he hasn't told us his real name yet." Lie for her, truth for Equius.

"Yeah, I know. That's why I want to find his brother, RA's brother with the real life key I just might need all along. Altho, who the fuck names their kid 'Crow'?" Sollux grunted.

Equius shook his head, "Qrow as in with a 'Q', Sollux. And I'm sorry to say this but I doubt that Qrow would let you find out about his little brother, name or location-wise. He tells me that 'RA' rarely leaves their home and is working on a rather important project that is taking up a lot of his time. And I know Qrow enough to know that he's very protective of his younger brother despite his slight complaining and antics." He explained with a small smile that had Nepeta withholding a squeal.

Two of her friends were getting along so greatly! OH that was just *purrfect*!

She inwardly giggled slightly at her inner pun but right now she couldn't be distracted, not now.

Sollux groaned before huffing, "Fuck it, I'll take my chances. If anything else I can try to find out more about him on RA and I guess RA's big brother, then if he can give me any clues or something." He moodily said with a frown.

Unfortunately for Nepeta, Equius piped in before she could say anything after being distracted with the thought of her friends being all goody-goody.

"Well it seems you're in luck, Qrow is currently using the toilet and should be back in any minute now."



Sollux perked and grin, "Fucking perfect then." With that he goes to make himself as comfortable as he could as Roxy finally sat up and properly greeted both Nepeta and Equius with her usual energetic personality.

As they all devolved into pleasant chatter, Nepeta was inwardly sweating and glancing at the direction where Qrow went towards the public bathroom.

*'C'mon Hal, surely you saw Sollux and Roxy coming... What are you going to do now?'* Nepeta thought as she hid her clenched fist from the others, she wouldn't blame Qrow from bailing and leaving them. No doubt it would disappoint Equius and the two computer smarties here as well as make Sollux frustrated and angry but it was a good way to stay incognito from the Lalondes and Striders.

In fact, she seemed so sure about the fact Hal would tell Qrow and that Qrow would leave with a half-assed excuse or something that she nearly lost it when she saw the incoming figure of one Qrow Davies with his hoodie up and hands tucked into the pockets of his black and red hoodie.

"Oh, here he is. Sollux, Roxy, this is Qrow Davis. Qrow, this is Sollux Captor and Roxy Lalonde." Equius introduced with a polite smile, Nepeta for once wanted to shake at her best friend and smack his head and wanted to apply the same to Qrow.

Sollux rose a brow as he looked over the guy that was supposed to be his troll's big brother, his eyes narrowed as he thinks that this blonde stranger with orange shades and a black and red hoodie seemed *very* familiar. Then he took a glance at his fellow hacker genius to only find her frozen and staring at 'Qrow Davis' with wide, disbelieving eyes.

"Uh... Sup?"

Qrow says kind of awkwardly, raising a hand in greeting.

Sollux's mind clicked and he gaped, thinking back to previous conversations and it feels like he just found a secret of the universe. "No fucking way."

"*Dave*?" Roxy asked tentatively although she scrambled to her feet, figuring out that if she tackled the blonde right now he would disappear or run.

Qrow shook his head, giving her a look. "Sorry lady, I'm not this 'Dave' person you're asking about. Just like back in that cemetery when you and that crazy dude in the anime shades chased me all over the fuckin' place. Look, I'm sorry about touching 'Dave's' grave and all but, I'm not him. Dave Strider is dead, you've seen his grave. I'm Qrow Davis." he says with a small forced grin, unsure on what to really do.

His gaze meets with Nepeta, though none of the others knew that. Nepeta sends him a pointed 'WTF are you even *doing*' look and his shoulders twitched noticeably in the unsaid words of 'IDFK' and his head tilts making his shades glint and Nepeta realizes that Hal had something to do with this.

When she gets her paws on Hal... Paws? She meant hands of course.

---

RA: Do not panic.

RA: I have made a rare miscalculated decision through thoughtless thinking process.

RA: Basically I made a rookie move I guess.

TF: hal

TF: what the fuck did you do and what the fuck is going to happen

RA: Okay in all thought process I did not expect one Sollux Captor to not be alone and actually had a person with him at the time being of my state of challenge.

RA: This was supposed to be some harmless, teasing lead that would have gone down the road of amusing shenanigans for the both of us and end up with a happy ending, the end.

RA: But I did not take certain things into account and I am very sorry about that.

RA: Take note that I will be alchemizing an awesome apology gift the moment the alchemizer is ready to alchemize again.

TF: halaxander. velvetine. davis.

TF: boi you better spill your ass right the fuck now or im headin straight home to confiscate your arm

RA: Alright, alright. Sollux Captor and Roxy Lalonde are currently heading their way into Prospit Garden to ask Nep and Equius about you. Well, about 'RA'th older brother' as Sollux may put it as I teased him with the fact Nepeta and Equius knows both you and I. Also side question: Did Egbert add fuckin' sass into the paradoxical slime mix or what.

TF: ...

TF: yep your arm privileges are currently fucking revoked, i am going straight home right to the fucking now to confiscate that limb and you are sure as hell ain't getting it for the next troll sweep

RA: NO

TF: yes

RA: I mean, no to the going straight home and stuff.

RA: Uh, red boss is here and he wants to speak with you.

TF: what

-- roboticAutomaton [RA] added shackledCrimson [SC] into the chat --

SC: Avian.

TF: what

TF: the fuck

SC: Language Avian. Yes I am at your base with Aviator as of right now, and I would advise you to restrain from coming back at the times notice. I encourage you to continue spending time with our Huntress LL though, face Roxy Lalonde and get it over with.

SC: I did say it was only a matter of time Avian, and the matter of time has come. We can only hope to control the situation.

TF: and how the fuck does me confronting roxy lalonde help control \*\*\*the situation\*\*\* which by the way, is \*\*\*both hal and i's situation\*\*\*

TF: how the fuck can this help when im trying my damned hardest to keep myself and hal away from them and hidden

SC: I am aware that you are very skeptical about my plan so far but you must trust me as the leader of the Iron Shackles and as the Second Coming of the Crimson Sufferer. This is an order that I know you must follow Avian.

TF: i

TF: goddamnit crimmy you used the full title thing on me and fuck you for that

RA: Okay, note that I did not expect him to pull the full on full title thing.

TF: don't think you're not out of trouble yet young man, after all of this i will deal with your side of this fuckery

RA: Eep, uh, boss? Little help and mercy here?

SC: You will find no such thing here Aviator, you have brought this upon yourself and you shall deal with the consequences like a true member of the Iron Shackles.

RA: fuck

RA: excuse me as i go plan for my funeral and also try to win my big brother's mercy with the awesome apology gift.

TF: yeah, you go do that.

SC: I will forever see your interactions with amusement, if this is how the Davis brothers interact I wonder much for the actual Strider equivalent. I also do wonder if the Striders are just as skilled in our work as you are, I've been viewing the training feeds from Hal and let me say you learn quite swiftly Avian. Though I somewhat doubt that they will be as blase as you are in dealing with our types of missions and goals.

TF: ...

SC: Don't give me that Qrow, you find that just as amusing as I do and you are flattered by my praise.

TF: meeting you outside the organization group gang biz was one of the weirdest and confusing moments i have ever experienced. you act nothing like you actually are in your civilian life, i mean i guess some? but the crimmy i know and follow is hella different from civilian crimmy

SC: Yes, you aren't the first nor will be the last to think that.

TF: i sure fucking ain't and i cannot wait to see the reactions of the dumbfucks you call your 'friends' to think that and realize it or maybe with your dramatic flair of revelation you might do. maybe the reaction of your cute brother too, dude's adorable in the most hilarious ways.

SC: I see... I do agree with your statements on both accounts but do remember that if you so choose to pursue my younger sibling you must first beat me at a legitimate 'strife' as you so call it.

TF: nah, don't worry big boss cherry. as cute as the fucker is, i'm not interested in relationships at the moment and won't be for a long fucking time so put down the gun you trigger happy psycho.

SC: If I'm the trigger happy psycho, which brings amusement to me in ways you clearly know about, then what does that make you oh sacred winged one?

TF: the awesome assassin that uses effective 1/2swords to finish the job most of the fucking time?

SC: Perhaps. Or perhaps you are a 16 year old angel being that came down from the heavens from the death of a innocent 12 year old, years after said death to combat the forces of evil.

TF: dear gog what the fuck has been going on about my mysterious past this time, are they still on the fucking angel theory again

SC: Musings from various subordinates within our group. Your looks and origins are truly mysterious and the glowing orange white wings do not help much Qrow.

TF: gogdammit and here i thought we were a bunch of organized mature hitmen/women/whatever from the underworld with otherwordly powers and heritages

TF: like seriously was there no other person out there in the entire fucking world with crow wings or fucking bird wings

SC: As far as we know, no. The closest to that are the butterfly-like wings that is more common within the Nitram family line. If I am correct, young Tavros will be getting his wings in his next birthday.

TF: well fuck.

TF: anyway i gotta go and do that thing you want me to do for fuck knows why

SC: Good.

SC: Also do note that when you return I will be awaiting, I wish to evaluate your training again.

TF: well isn't that good motherfucking news then

TF: something that i can look forward too as i throw myself into the hot hot fire that may or may not have irons in it

SC: Yes, good luck with that. And I thank you for trusting me in my judgement and choice.

TF: is2g crimson if this falls out

TF: Boss of the Iron Shackles, Second Coming of the Crimson Sufferer and whatever ridiculous titles there are or not. I will not hesitate to rip you and your group limb from limb, I will cut and burn the whole tree down right down to the fucking roots. Do you understand that?

SC: Loud and clear Avian.

TF: good

TF: now fucking excuse me then

-- turntimeFeathertail [TF] is an idle chum! --

RA: ...

RA: Are you sure this is a good idea.

---

"Whatever do you mean Hal?"

Hal stared down into red eyes, back straight against his chair as he looked at both his and Qrow's big boss.

"This whole 'confronting Roxy Lalonde and getting it over with' decision of yours. It was my fault that I didn't take into the account of Sollux's friendship with Roxy, and Qrow clearly has the chance to just avoid the whole incoming mess and shenanigans by ditching the meet up. Nepeta wouldn't mind, she'd underfuckingstand."

Red eyes closed, they were almost the exact shade of red of his brother yet completely different at the same time.

"I will admit that my decision was a bit rushed and made up on the spot but something tells me that this is the right path we'll have to go on." He replies and Hal stares at him for a good while, he doesn't seem to mind and just continues watching the past videos of Qrow training in their training rooms. Ranging from shooting with a pistol and a rifle to him practicing with his 1/2 sword.

"You and Qrow have every right to not trust me and decline, to dismiss my orders and go about free on your own forthcoming and decisions yet you stay in my group and follow my lead. I do not know why but I am grateful for that trust and I will do my best to not consciously misplace that trust or abuse it." He says with a glance to the fellow not-entirely human Hal, his white canvas bled to red and his pupil disappeared, leaving only a known certain symbol floating in his bloody red eyes.

The Blood Aspect symbol replaced his pupils, glowing crimson on dark blood red scleras.

Hal sighed and looked away from the powerful gaze, "Fine. Whatever, I just hope you know what you're doing Kankri."

Kankri Vantas smiled at him, sharpened teeth dulling as his eyes faded back to normal. Surprisingly, his smile is sad and slightly hopeful.

"As do I Hal, as do I." He says before looking back towards the videos that Hal uploaded into his laptop. He pauses as his pesterchum pings.

-- gothicAdvantages [GA] is pestering calmingGrievances [CG] --

GA: Kankri where in fuck's name are yo+u.

CG: P9rrim did y9u n9t ask Dexter ab9ut my current wherea69uts. Als9, language P9rrim, very 9ffensive language there. Did he n9t inf9rm y9u 9f where I am, I am currently at a lecture P9rrim and I w9uld like t9 pay attenti9n t9 it. Really must y9u w9rry ab9ut me s9 much like y9ur m9ther,



n9 9ffense t9 her h9wever since she is a w9nderful m9ther 6elieve me 6ut I am n9t a child P9rrim n9r are y9u my m9ther s9 I w9uld really appreciate y9u checking y9ur privileges and st9p treating me as such. H9nestly the am9unt 9f times I've t9ld y9u this y9u refuse t9 listen t9 what I say, n9ne 9f y9u d9.

CG: #TG #Language # N9t listening #Currently in a lecture P9rrim #N9t a child

GA: Ugh, never mind then.

GA: And yes I did ask Dexter abo+ut it, I was just wo+rried abo+ut yo+u after what Cro+nus said and did.

Kankri raised a brow before he remembered the incident yesterday and scoffed. He was fine, something like that wouldn't phase someone like him. Besides, he wasn't interested into Cronus that way despite what everyone else thought. He simply had no time for relationships for the moment as well as for the next few years.

CG: While I d9 appreciate the c9ncern I am fine. Cr9nus is simply being Cr9nus and 6esides I am a celi6ate, we were w9uldn't w9rk in the first place. I was 9ver it the m9ment Cr9nus left in a childish huff. N9w as much as I w9uld l9ve to chat m9re with y9u P9rrim I w9uld like t9 pay attention t9 my current lecture.

CG: Unless y9u w9uld like to discuss this lecture with me.

GA: No+, that's no+t necessary at all.

He smirked at the fast reply. How predictable.

CG: Very well. G99dbye P9rrim.

GA: Bye Kankri.

-- gothicAdvantages [GA] stopped pestering calmingGrievances [CG] --

Hal whistled from his place behind Kankri, peeking over the other's shoulder from behind the couch.

"Just one mention of sharing a lecture and she's out, man you must have worked quite the mask there boss." Hal said with an impressed smirk.

To one he replied with his own, "But of course, father told me to make the most convincing mask to help hide my true self along with the family lineage. Honestly it was quite easy and to be honest, not all of my 'friends' are very smart." He admitted with a chuckle.

"However, soon enough. I have the feeling that the mask I have constructed will be shattered and thrown right out the window in the near future." He mused, not really concerned about that fact. In truth, he was a bit tired in acting all uppity and 'obsessed' with trigger warnings.

*'Trigger happy psycho indeed.'* Kankri thought with amusement as he looked over into his sylladex to see the ridiculous amount of firearms and ammo in it.

---

## ***Ping***

Jane blinked before checking her phone, Jade finally joined them in the food place they told her to meet with them. Unfortunately Roxy was off doing something with Sollux Captor back at school.

She froze and tugged at Dirk, gaining everyone's attention and showed her phone

**psst guys. prospit gardens.**

now. like.

really fucking now.

hurry.

one fuxking word

dave >80

~RoLal

## Chapter End Notes

How does one do a proper Kankri.

Like, the proper stereotyped Kankri. I do not do much hashtagging so pardon to the possible misuse and shit.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed! Till next time.

# Confrontation Conflicts

## Chapter Notes

I am not going to lie, thinking up this chapter was kind of hard. Ranging from the reactions and personalities of every character to the way I write during the entire chapter.

The reactions were the hardest to do, that and the entire confrontation entirely. So I'm sorry if the chapter seems a bit, 'eeeehm meeeeh???' in my personal opinion but it's the best that I can do as of right now since my freedom is now limited to a few days and I wanted to get this posted before that limited time was over.

I do hope you enjoy though :P

P.S. Heh, can you find him? Doc Scratch

Peekaboo. Hello there :D

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

*He stared up, and up, and up.*

*His wide red eyes are unshielded as he stared, shades lain forgotten somewhere around him but he can't move. There's someone beside him, shaking him and trying to get him out of his frozen stupor with their sharp hands digging into his clothes and tearing at it slightly and he can faintly hear the sound of glitched out shrieking, he can't tell if its human or not.*

***But all of that is white noise compared to the uncomprehending sounds of ticks and tocks, the rings of bells and sharp clangs of gongs with the distant echo of ominous cawing of a black bird.***

*There's another set of hands appearing, more human-like but hard as steel. They're both trying to get his attention but they're failing and they know it, the human-like set of hands disappear abruptly as if pushed away as the light he's staring into shines brighter and the less-human-like hands clutch at his ruined shirt tighter.*

***It's overwhelming him, them, everyone. The glitched out shrieking intensifies and there's another scream joining in just as glitchy as the other one but it was more human. The colorful light is overwhelming and it's too late to stop now. And suddenly the less-human hands are gone and he's alone.***

***The overwhelming pain that floods his senses drowns out his final thought just as he feels his torso writhe in pain and something's wrong with his back.***

***He thinks of his brothers. And he is gone .***

*"... Most interesting don't you think master? I honestly did not see this coming, did you? But in the long run, it makes no difference. At least things will be even more interesting here, hooohooooo~"*

---

*'This. This is awkward man.'*

Qrow thought plainly as he sat beside Nepeta, keeping his cool facade as he ate the sandwich Nepeta offered him. Mindful of the sharp nails that secretly dug into his hidden hand that was behind him, Nepeta was careful not to dig her nails into his hand too deeply. Just enough to cause pain but not enough to break skin.

"Tho... you're *not* Dave Thtrider, you're RA'th big brother. Qrow Davith..." Sollux said with a confused deadpanned look, Roxy sat by his side. Not taking her eyes off of Qrow for one second.

"Yeah. And you're Sollux Captor, the guy my little bro has been messin' with." Qrow retorted with a smirk that made Sollux fume a bit. Change the subject, focus on the thing he came for which was supposedly Hal. Speaking of the lil' brat, he was so getting his arm confiscated the moment Qrow came back. *Damn it Lalonde please look away it's very unnerving know you're there.*

"You *know* he's been fucking with me?"

Qrow snorted, "Course, he's my little brother. Lil' shit's a gogdamn pain in the ass sometimes but he's a good brat, a smartass lil' shit but a good brat."

SC: How sentimental.

TF: you sir can shut your ass up i have no literal shit in what im doing and this is all **\*\*your\*\*** stupid idea and all your fault if it fails.

TF: remember that asshole

SC: Duly noted.

Roxy frowned, as much as she wanted to insist to Dave that he didn't have a little brother, seeing as *he* was the little brother according to Dirk, and that he *was* Dave. She knew it wouldn't get through his stubborn head, she didn't know what was going on. Was Dave faking not knowing who she and Dirk was? Did he have amnesia? Or was he truly someone else that wasn't related to Dave in anyway besides looks and possible personality?

No that wasn't it, she trusted Dirk's judgement and if he says that this was Dave then dammit it *was* Dave!... Right?

She doesn't have a clue, so she let herself be ignored and gathered what she could from the talk. But that didn't stop her from sending out a message to Jane and the others, they'd be at that restaurant this afternoon right? It's not *that* far away, they'd have to take a cab but if she could get 'Qrow' to stay longer and keep talking...

Sollux inhaled and sent him a wary but slightly hopeful look, "And the chances of you tellin' me his name are..."

Qrow chuckled and shook his head, "*Zilch*. Sorry buckaroo, but this big bro ain't spillin' nothin. This mouth is under tight-lip lock and key, might as well call me Sir Zipper Lips of Lock Kingdom." He said with a smirk, though inwardly he was holding himself from rambling even further on

instinct. It was hard work not to let his lips rag on like usual, but he managed. Barely.

Roxy raised a brow at the familiar title, 'Sir Zipper Lips'? *Aawfully* similar to her own creation of, 'Miss Zipper Lips'. She hasn't used that familiar title in a while and she could vaguely remember telling that to Dave once before after the blonde was keeping a secret from his brothers; it was for their birthdays.

Her lips tilted to a smile, she knew it. This *was* Dave... But did Dave knew he was Dave? Her inner Mom and Cousin Rose thought carefully about it all, carefully observing the little subtleties that D-Qrow was showing.

Knowing Dave, he was going to be stubborn so might as well call him Qrow while he's using that name regardless if he had amnesia or not.

"Well *fuck*." Sollux cursed before turning back to Qrow, "Why the hell not?"

Qrow shrugged, "This is between you and him, I got no place between two hackers in that virtual world you both skulk in. You're just going to have to deal with it, as much as a brat the lil' shit is he *mostly* knows what he's doing. Other times, not so much be definitely tries..." He says dryly with a hidden twitch of the eye, yeah he mostly knew what he was doing with Sollux but he didn't know that the guy was going to be bringing Roxy now did he?

"Though I will say, you're the smartest asshole that's been going after my lil bro so far. A lot of people have tried to get through his, what did he call it? 'Barriers', and barely any of them managed to even *scratch* the surface of 'em." He admitted and smirked as he sees the light puff of pride the other had at that, that was true really.

"Well, what else can you tell us about your little brother?" Surprisingly enough, Roxy's the one to ask this and Qrow is a bit taken back since he was mostly focused on Sollux to pay attention to his, ex-ecto-mother-sister-cousin-friend?

Nepeta has long removed her hand from his, but he already knows the pointed soundless question he gets from the feline-loving teen.

He answers, much to Nepeta's gowing ire, concern, worry and other emotions the feline teen had for him at the moment. She clearly remembers his determined decision in steering clear from the Lalondes, Striders, Egberts and Crockers. By all accounts if it weren't for Kankri and her involvement he would've been avoiding her the whole time since she was friends with Jade and John and knew and was known by the entire group.

"Mmm, I guess telling a few things won't hurt. *'But knowing my luck it probably will but I'm doing it fucking anyway'* I'm guessing we're the same age and shit so know that when I say lil bro I mean it, he's definitely younger than us but he ain't no kid that can't handle himself. If it weren't for certain circumstances I'd say he's completely capable of being independent, but even then I'd still be on his ass since he's my bro and all." Qrow drawled.

Roxy mentally took note, promising to do a background check up on 'Qrow Davis' and possibly try to find 'RA' on her own. Though she'd help Sollux *if* he asks for it, but she knows he was probably going to do the same the moment they get to a computer.

SC: Again; such sentiment. Shall I show this to our special little hacker to ease his nerves? He seems to be working quite the tizzy on my end, and I even doubt he's checking in on our chat!

TF: nah let him panic a bit more

TF: shit deserves it for this

SC: Alright then.

SC: Oh and before I forget, I do wish to compliment you on your little tirade with the Crew. Hal informs me that regardless on what happens, it would seem that the operation succeeded nonetheless and I have no doubt that it did. We both know that Diamonds will make the final choice in the



end. Well done once again Avian. Though I truly commend on the certain part with Spades, marvelous work there.

SC: Dare I say that Highblood might even be proud at that! Do I have express permission to show this little clip to him in our next and latest meeting? For legal and peaceful entertainment purposes only of course, nothing else.

SC: That also reminds me, their newest 'Bard' will be attending. His Highblood would like you to do the same with his Bard as you did with his Prince, however without Huntress LL this time.

TF: huh

TF: sure why the fuck not

TF: its been way too long since i kicked juggalo ass anyway

SC: Please refrain from calling them that in person, they are quite sensitive to that dear Avian. They don't take it too well and I doubt that even my abilities will stop them should you do go with that little nickname and enrage them, and I doubt that you will escape unscathed this time.

TF: whatever yeah

TF: ill do it, the whole bard thing

SC: Wonderful.

SC: Do excuse me for a moment, I'm tutoring Hal more on gunplay. When his other arm is complete I have no doubt that his gunplay mastery will heighten and improve, he might even come close to my own skills if he so wishes and focuses on more on firearms.

SC: Though I take it I will have to find out \*after\* you give him his arm back after confiscation.

"Qrow, are you alright?" Equius' voice snapped him out and Qrow nodded as nonchalantly as he could.

"Yeah sorry, just thinking about something. Kinda forgot what though."  
'*How long should I keep the arm, a few days or a full on week? Decisions, decisions. Man being a responsible big brother is sure hard work.*'

"Honestly, your tendency to nod off like that is sometimes concerning." Equius deadpanned and Qrow sent him a quirked brow, he didn't do that often did he? He definitely didn't, he voiced this to the mechanic who only huffed and sent him a look beneath his cracked pair of shades.

"No not often, but enough times for me to take note about it. Isn't that right Nepeta?"

The olive-wearing teen hummed, "I dunno Equius, but I guess Qrow *does* tend to do that doesn't he?" She questioned sweetly, "Well, I'll be sure to make sure he's paying more attention next time! I swear it!" She says cheerfully and Qrow sweats a little underneath his hoodie at the underlying tone underneath it.

"Oh boy..." Qrow muttered as he closes his eyes and rubs them, fully aware and ignoring the fact that Roxy was pointedly staring at him as he did that. He was so going to kick Kankri's ass in a strife for this, preferably with his 1/2 sword since he wasn't as used to fighting with a gun instead of a blade.

---

## ***BANG BANG BANG***

Kankri hummed as he observed Hal's progress, despite of only having one arm his aim was better than most of his own men sometimes. Though that would probably account for his robotic mind and augmentations, nonetheless it was still impressive.

"Do be mindful of the recoil, that and be mindful of the noise when using *regular* firearms without silencers. On those matters, any new model of silenced and modified firearms available yet? That and those specialized bullets I've requested as well, I've been running low on those shock bullets as well as the explosive ones. *Especially* the explosive ones." Kankri asked with a purr and a grin that had Hal rolling his digital eyes at him.

"Sure, I got a new set waiting for you. Wanna take a peek?" Hal asked as he tosses the pistol back into the strife card, done with gun training and wanting to check on the progress of his arm; which would soon be confiscated due to his 'rookie move'. Hal grimaced at the thought, though to anyone, *especially* his brother, it would look like he was pouting instead because of his young physical features of a young 13 year old.

Kankri grinned sharply, "Certainly!" He exclaims and closes the laptop he had in his lap after a final glance at it, Qrow was idle as of now and had yet to reply to his latest message so he just puts it in his sylladex for now. He sits up from his place at the sidelines and makes his way towards Hal who waits for him only for a moment before moving on, fully expecting Kankri to follow him.

Though Kankri has been in their base enough time to not need an escort but it was a moot point seeing that if he even tried to use their 'alchemiter' as they had put it, he wouldn't know jack shit about it. He was no dumb teen, he was very intelligent even in his masked persona so never say to him that he was a stupid person. *Never*. Regardless of who he was at the moment.

But he will admit that he was a bit at a loss at the Davis' personal creation, a machine that did amazing things and could easily make *millions* of dollars should both brothers actually agree on it. However they don't, they keep it to themselves and do what they like with it. Something that Kankri both approves of, it was better to keep advantages to yourself to help you in the long run mostly.

The fact that the Davis' brothers had trusted him enough to let him know how they made their things and even share their creations to both him and his group was part of the reason why he left the thing alone to both brothers.

They entered the 'Alchemy' room as Qrow and Hal dubbed it, and it would never fail to slightly awe Kankri every time he sees the process in action. Just as they enter he sees Hal's arm being slowly completed by the machine, floating in the middle of the giant platform and slowly appearing into existence in the middle of the beams.

"Hmm, almost done but not yet." Hal muttered as he too looked at his arm before turning to the side and facing one of the very old and broken down machines and carefully extracted sylladex cards from their hiding places from said old machine. Yeah these old buckets of bolts still had their uses besides being spare parts and metal scraps for the the alchemiter or whatever project he was working on, like hiding inventory from prying eyes.

He looked at the cards before settling them down at the edge of the platform of the alchemiter and motioned Kankri to them, all the while turning to another old machine and began getting cards from that machine as well.

There were 3 cards on the platform and Kankri looked over each card and its contents with interest. There were two rifles and one pistol, and they certainly looked interesting.

"Hmm, interesting design." Kankri hummed as he takes a rifle in hand, measuring the weight and aiming at the wall and looking through the scope and his eyes widen as he sees the view through the scope and he grins, "As well as interesting upgrades." he purred as he looked content with the rifle before moving on with the next one.

"Thanks, these things weren't cheap you know. Took a long time too, you're lucky we even had these finished since we decided to create them earlier this week. Though they haven't been tested yet, Qrow thought he'd let you test it out for us like usual." Hal said as he gets two more cards and puts them on the platform.

"Shock and explosive bullets, your favorite. Anything else?"

Kankri's grin sharpened as he takes the contents of each card, he wasn't completely out of the bullets so he just stacked them in the same card, Hal takes the two cards back and stashed them back as storage space. "I'll be sure to inform you on how they do in action, though I know that Qrow and yourself may see yourselves. Though if I use them and you're not within vicinity I'll be sure to report their status." Kankri says cheerfully as he twirls the rifle before switching it for the pistol.

"I have been meaning to order for the type of computation devices like Qrow's goggles and shades, I think it's time we had more conventional ways of communication. More subtle and hidden than our usual methods of communication. Less hands on."

Hal nodded, "Been wonderin' when you were going to ask me that. So I made these in advance, you're welcome." He says nonchalantly as he throws Kankri a pair of bracelets which Kankri deftly caught after quickly putting away the pistol, he observes them and puts them on and was surprised to see a small holographic screen appear as he touched at one bracelet.

"You'll get the hang of it, one bracelet is for pesterchum and computer shit, the other is like a phone that you can use. There's three settings on the phone bracelet, though I'll have to borrow that for a bit since I need to implement the phone setting to Qrow's goggles and shades. After what happened with the Crew I guess I should get that over with." Hal says and Kankri complies, letting Hal take one bracelet that seemed to be the phone one.

"I see, thank you Hal... Is there any more for the others?" Kankri questioned, fiddling with the holographic screen. Already logging onto Pesterchum with both handles, also checking if it was safe though he doubts it wasn't since it was Hal who made it and installed Pesterchum.

Hal shook his head, "Not much, I've got a few other pairs of that type of bracelet with certain designs for certain others and none for the phone bracelets as of yet. I got one for Nepeta when she asks or when its needed and another one for Psi as well. If you're thinking of giving this stuff to everyone in the group then you're going to have to wait a long damn while." Hal admitted as he puts away the brace-cell and takes out another two compute-lets that were designed and colored in olive and gold.

Kankri smiled, "Psi will definitely be very happy for that, Nepeta as well if she doesn't claw both you and Qrow when they come."

Hal blinks before groaning, "Oh fuuuck, that's right... Nep's there with Qrow and she's gonna be so *pissed* at meee..." He whines as he rubs his face

before perking, "Oh wait, she'll be more focused on you." He pointed out happily.

Kankri chuckled and shook his head, "Focused on me yes, however who was the one who neglected checking on the youngest Captor's company?"

Hal groans again and chucks a plush Hella Jeff doll at him, Kankri's nose curled in distaste at the plush and promptly threw it back at Hal who grumbles at him.

"Don't be like that Hal. Anyway, I suppose we should be checking back on Qrow shall we? We've left him unsupervised long enough." Kankri says lightheartedly and smiles at the underlying worry that Hal gains at the mention of that.

"Nghah shit, you're right. He's probably knee-deep in shit again, c'mon let's hurry." Hal urged and exited the Alchemy room with the crimson-wearing teen following him with amusement.

Hal quickly uses a chord and plugs one that lead to the tv and one to his glasses so Kankri could see what he saw. After a few minutes the two had to flinch at the unexpected close up sight and sound of a pissed off Dirk Strider that seemed to be looming above Qrow. The footage angle was slightly awkward indicating that his shades were knocked askew but not completely of Qrow's face.

"Stop lying you asshole! We thought you fucking died, there is a motherfucking **grave** with your name on it, it's YOUR GRAVE!"

"I'm telling you you got the wrong guy! I am NOT Dave fucking Strider!"

"No you fucking are! You're my shitty ass little brother, DAVE ELIZA-FUCKING-BETH STRIDER!!"

"No. I. Am. **NOT!**"

With that Qrow's fist is seen hitting Dirk across the face, knocking the pointy anime shades off as Qrow throws the Strider off of him. The footage

is shaky and jerky as Qrow moved around and there's multiple voices shouting, Qrow included. And suddenly the shades are knocked off completely and are on the grass as it showed the scrambling feet and legs of everyone included.

"Well fuck, I know I said he was in knee-deep shit and all but I certainly did not fucking expect *this* shit."

"Yes, well..."

"Yep, definitely your fault."

"Hush, I was simply following my instinct and senses."

"Some senses you got there boss, top notch grade A senses right there."

---

Dirk Strider was on a war path.

He had been the moment Jane had shown him Roxy's text, the others were following him closely and keeping him from colliding and exploding with anyone in his path.

"Dirk please calm down! I know you're determined and all but Dave's not really going anywhere soon. Roxy's stalling him till we get there!" Jane called out as they finally reached the park, the cab they had took had been held up due to sudden traffic and they had to hoof it towards the park.

Dirk grunted and said nothing but his stride noticeably shortened as everyone caught up with him, Jane and John.

"Oh gosh, are we really going to see Dave again?" Jade questioned quietly towards Rose, panting lightly along with her and Jake.

The blonde shrugged, "I suppose so, we'll have to see." She replied tersely as she fixed her crooked hairband on her head.

"F-Finally! We're here, now where did Roxy say they were at?" Jake questioned as he took to Jane and Dirk's side, a small look of nervousness

on his face. Tugging at the seam of his short-sleeved green jacket.

John answered, looking over Jane's shoulder. "They're by the lake on a green and blue blanket, you can't miss'em!" He says as they entered the park, instantly they hone in on the lake and find the green and blue blanket being sat on by 5 familiar individuals.

Quickly they made their pace and quickly they saw Roxy and Sollux along with Nepeta and Equius, leaving the fifth individual to be...

Roxy noticed them and beamed at them, waving frantically with a strange look on her face despite her smile that seemed to strain a bit. That caught the attention of everyone around her as they turned to look at what she was waving at and with bated breath, the fifth individual in a black and red hoodie turned.

Everyone's breaths hitched as they stared into a stoic face with orange aviators, aviators that shouldn't be orange but black.

"Oh god.../Holy shit..." Breathed Jade and Rose as they see proof to Dirk and the other's claims, Dave *was* alive. Or he seemed to be, Rose argued as the chance that this teen just had the unlikely uncanny look to her deceased friend and *jesus he's even got Dave's facial structure down to the bone.*

It didn't seem to be faked, no artificial surgical structuring of any kind.

Qrow shifted slightly, *very* uncomfortable and his heart hammered underneath his desperately stoic facade, "... Sup." He says lamely and immediately wants to take it back and just slam his leader's face in for even *suggesting* this shit. He was *not* ready to face everyone at once! Especially Dirk.

John smiled brightly if a bit wavering, "Dave! See Rose, Jade, we told you Dave was alive, he's right here!" He laughed slightly, tearing up a bit. The shock was wearing off quickly with the second meeting and the sobbing relief was coming in.



Qrow cringed at the sight of the teary looks, guilt building up at that. He, he didn't like being the cause of his friend's tears. He never wanted... But he can't be their Dave, he just *wasn't*. He was Qrow and he had Hal as a little brother who was waiting to get his arm confiscated and ass kicked back at home, not to mention Kankri and the whole fucked up world he and Hal were involved with.

He can't get them involved. He refused to.

Qrow sighed, "Look, I-!!" He was cut off as he was suddenly lifted from his place on the blanket and into the arms of one slightly shaking Dirk Strider. The other blonde was hugging Qrow tightly, as if afraid that he would disappear if he'd let go and that nearly doubled the guilt that Qrow.

That and being hugged by a younger looking Scratched version of his Bro felt really weird and slightly wrong, ~~yet is felt right~~

"You fuckin' *dumbass*. *What the actual fuck dude*." Dirk shakily said as he clutched at his younger twin, *younger twin* he had a twin again, a brother again. He, fuck, there goes the Strider facade!

Just as he hugs he sees the stunned faces of the other 4 people on the blanket by the lake, Roxy looks at him happily, tearing up and crying a bit. Sollux seems confused as well along with Equius, both looking at each other unsurely with Equius being more unsure. Nepeta on the other hand...

Nepeta was looking at Dirk with wide eyes, shocked obviously but there was something else in her eyes as her fists clenched in her lap that went unnoticed by the others. And right before he's being pushed away he *swears* that Nepeta's pupil seemed to dilate unnaturally... *like a cats*.

Unfortunately he couldn't focus on that as he focused on his younger twin, *pushing* him away.

"Wha-"

"Personal space man! And I *definitely* think you got the wrong guy, I don't know you. I'm sorry but I've never even met you before the whole

graveyard chase bash we had a week ago! I don't, fuck man, look I'm sorry for touchin' your 'Dave's' grave but I ain't him I can promise you that. My name is Qrow Davis, and I am not your brother." Qrow says firmly, throwing every Strider-esque training he had been taught and beaten into him by *his **Bro*** who was dead and *buried* on LOWAS and was desperately keeping it up. He hope he's doing enough because he isn't really sure and he thinks he's shaking ever so slightly and if he is, he hopes no one notices.

That stuns everyone with the exception of Nepeta who is trying really hard to keep calm and stay in the background until necessary.

Dirk looks at him in disbelief before anger swiftly replaces that disbelief and he grits his teeth because *how dare he*, how dare he *deny who he was* when it was clear *he was **DAVE***.

"Don't you fucking dare shithead, you *are* Dave Strider, you are!" He says as he steps closer to Qrow who nearly falters before stepping forward and butting heads with Dirk.

"Don't call me a shithead asshole! And no, I am not." Qrow spat back, black shades clashing with orange as the two teens of equal height glared at each other.

Behind them everyone was uneasily shifting and looking at the two with worry, unsure on what to do. Though they all yelped and yelled in surprise as Dirk tackled Qrow down, looming over the other blonde angrily as he stared into one red eye as Qrow's glasses were awkwardly angled on his face.

His eyes were red, Dave's eyes were red-*his eyes were **red***.

"Stop lying you asshole! We thought you fucking died, there is a motherfucking **grave** with your name on it, it's YOUR GRAVE!" *'You made us bury you, made your **grave** and thought you were dead for years WHY?'*

"I'm telling you you got the wrong guy! I am NOT Dave fucking Strider!" *'I'm not your Dave, I never was, I never will. That's not my grave, I'm alive and I already have a brother, and he's not you.'*

"No you fucking are! You're my shitty ass little brother, DAVE ELIZA-FUCKING-BETH STRIDER!!" *'Please, please for fuck's sake just stop it and come back and just tell us why...'*

"No. I. Am. **NOT!**"

Dirk grunted as he was knocked off of Dave, shades knocked off and laying on the grass as everyone gasps. His jaw hurts at the punch, Dave always had one hell of a right hook.

Both Dirk and Qrow scrambled to stand as they glared at each other, and for a moment it's all still before Qrow and Dirk are at each other's throats shouting as everyone scrambled to get them apart. Shouting as well. At some point Qrow's shades are completely knocked off and *everyone* can see his red red *red* eyes that were narrowed and angry.

No one knows what to do completely as the group half themselves to keep one Strider away from the other, or rather one Strider away from one Davis.

Dirk has Jake, Jane, Roxy and Equius on his side to keep him away.

Qrow has John, Jade, Rose and Nepeta on his side to keep him away.

Sollux is just there on the sidelines unsure of what the fuck was going on.

From the forest hidden from everyone's sight and knowledge there is movement.

*"Hmm... Yes, very interesting indeed. Everything was getting quite boring, this is too good so far~ Yes, that little mistake of mine, and how rare that is really, seems to have made into a perfectly interesting event! Oh how I so look forward to the future! Hoohooohoooo~"*

## Chapter End Notes

Kudos to anyone who's found out about a certain cue ball's lines within this chapter when reading through this *once* ;) To those who don't get it, scroll back to the top and highlight a blank space after the note and

before the line break of the first scene and the final scene at the end just as you highlighted this part of the note~ <3

Hehehehehe, *highlight* of my life ;]

Well, did you find him? No? Hint hint. Why is there a blank space before these words and at certain points of the chapter? Why was there a single o after my question at the start, no it's not a typo~ If you don't get it, don't worry someone will soon enough I think. I'm feeling quite playful this chapter despite its difficult creation C;

Also, I dunno if it worked for mobile viewers so sorry about that. Try text to speech or copy paste :P

I wonder if I should leave subtle hints like this throughout the story... Who knows C: there's no decision yet.

# Strider Reunion Gone Bad

## Chapter Notes

Okay, since my laptop is broken and I have to rely on a bluetooth keyboard which makes things more easier but not as uncomfortable. Stories are going to be slowly updated since my fucked up non-existent schedule is even more fucked up now, I'll be updating stories with chapters I'm finished with so.... to everyone for every one of my stories: sorry for the long wait and all :(

Tensions are high and angst is coming, the reunion is not successful this chapter.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

tipsyGnostalgic [TG] began pestering totalmasterTexdirector [TT]

TG: uuuuh

TG: ngfuck

TG: so uh

TG: this is happening n i thunk u guys need to come ober here n do somewthong

TT: lil rox what are you talking about

tipsyGnostalgic [TG] has sent picture [uuhwefoundhim.jpeg](#)

TT: Where are you.

TG: bro dat u

TT: Roxy where are you

TG: fuck it, were at prospit gatdebs

TG: \*gardens

TG: were managing in keepin them seperated n all but i dunno how long its gunna last so u guyz gotta be quik

TG: dear gog idfk on wats goin on but SUMTHINGI is going on with dave, bro d hes fuck

TG: you'll see when you get here, word of warning though: the name he has right now or thinks is his is grow davis and hes acting all weird

TT: what

TT: We're on our way to Prospit, keep them behaved and make sure he doesn't leave the park.

TG: roger dat

TG: roxlal siging off

TG: \*signing

---

"Holy fuck what the shit." breathed D as he stared into his phone and for once not even complaining when his younger twin came to snatch it out of his hands, too stunned at what he's seen before his phone was taken.

It was a picture of one angry and shadeless Dave Strider who was being held back by John and the others, it was slightly blurry but the picture had shown Dave's face clear enough to be seen and that was without a fucking doubt, their little previously deceased brother.

"Dave." breathed Bro as he looked at the picture and asking Roxy where they were before D snatched his phone back to both stare at the picture and reply slightly to Roxy "They're at Prospit Gardens." D told Bro who snatched the phone and quickly replied before shoving it back to D and grabbing his older twin.

"Fucking hell we need to get there now!" Bro urged D who had no complaints, Bro captchalogued his laptop as D captchalogued his phone and instantly they were out the door. Prospit Gardens was near and with the rate they were going at they'd be there soon. Hopefully by the time they got there things would calm down and that Dave was still there.

They would get there brother back and maybe even get some answers to what the hell was going on.

---

Roxanne hummed as she looked at the box, frowning as she looked over it. It seemed to be an ordinary, wooden box with a touchscreen thingy on the top but she couldn't get anything out of it!

There were no visible locks, the screen was completely unresponsive and it was starting to frustrate her and get on her nerves. She's almost willing to get this damned thing x-rayed but something tells her that won't really work out. She's also tempted to just smash it open but who knows what could be inside and what would happen if she did that, she's not naive and dumb enough to believe nothing would happen and was healthily wary that if forcing the box to open it could very well explode or something.

She groaned as she sat down on her chair, glaring at the mystery chest box from her place behind her private office desk. She was currently in her private personal office in Skaianet labs, where she worked and partially owned the place. She was the head scientist, the big honcho, the cool lady of science, it was her.

Though, that could also be said for Jade and Jake's cool badass grandma Jaiden English who co-owned the company with her brother in law, Jacob Harley. Both were out of country right now on very important business, it was the reason why the hadn't told them yet about what was happening, Jaiden in Japan with Joey while Jacob in Germany with Jude. They were coming back soon of course and maybe then both old timers could help her with the box, that and solve the mystery with Dave.

Not to mention Jude would be all over this with Joey being a theorist and conspiracy nerd like when he was a kid but both would mainly be

concerned with Dave and what might be happening.

The blonde mother blinked as she felt her pocket vibrate, it was her phone. She fished it out to find her sister calling her, she brought it to ear and answered.

"Heya Rosie, what's going on big sis?"

"We need to get to Prospit Gardens right now Roxanne."

"What? Why? Is somethin' happenin' there? Something big?"

"Yes, our children are currently facing Dave as of now. Roxy has told Dereck, David and I about the situation. Rose is currently busy in mediating between Dirk and Dave and keep them from physically fighting each other, Roxy has gone to help her and they're doing what they can to stall enough time for both Dereck and David to come."

"HOLY SHIT WHAT? WHY DIDN'T YA SAY SO, I'M COMIN'!"

Roxanne yelped as she was already out the door the moment Rosaline told her her kid/s were facing the previously thought dead Strider. She ignored most of the questions that came her way as she rushed out of the building.

"I'm nearing Skaiatech-net Labs, unfortunately Casey is on her day-off and I couldn't ask of her to drive me so we will have to bear with my driving for now."

"Really? That's awesome! You haven't driven in a bit big sis, we'll get there in no time."

"Yes though I will admit that I am a bit rusty but it shall be good enough, thankfully there isn't much traffic today, alright, I'm outside your building. Hurry."

"Gotcha!" Roxanne panted lightly as she finally exits the building and sees her elder twin in her dark pink car, Rosaline nodded at her as she quickly enters the car. "How far are we from, Prospit Gardens? Yeah."



"Not far, we'll get there quick if it continues to be no traffic. Seat belt little sister."

"What are we waiting for? Let's go!"

"Well said, hopefully our questions will finally be answered with this encounter."

With that, Rosaline drives with both Lalondes on the edge of their seats and anxious to see their children and one dead teen.

Back in the labs within Roxanne's private office, a certain mysterious box lays in waiting.

The screen on the top flickers briefly and displays a red and lime green swirling circle, the box shivers for a moment then stills before the screen returns to a blank screen.

Somewhere in the world, a clock ticks in a broken rhythm and a pair of twins that both hated each other shivered in unison.

Soon.

---

"Shit, I wasn't expecting this to happen. Aviator, contact Salamancer and have him drive to Prospit and wait for Avian there." Kankri commanded, slipping easily into Crimson as Hal obeyed without another word.

"Also get track the messages coming from the others, no doubt they would have alerted their guardians now."

"Too late, Roxy Lalonde already told both elder Striders and one elder Lalonde. Her security was good enough to stall me, estimated four adults coming to the scene." Hal told him with a grimaced, tv showing what he was doing as he screened the messages the skilled blonde girl sent towards the adults.

Kankri cursed, "Can you stall them?"

"I can stall the Lalondes, they're driving so I can mess with the traffic lights and stall them for a bit but the Striders are on foot and they'll be there soon enough."

"Why did I have to listen to my instincts? To the damned blood powers? I did not want this to happen to Qrow this soon, I know he's not ready to face the adults yet! The children sure but not the guardians." Kankri groaned as he looked at the open tab that showed the scrambling feet of everyone present and hears the shouting.

Hal shook his head, "I don't know man but with this incident things are going to get hella harder for my bro and I." Hal grunts before smirking as he stalls the Lalondes, spying the frustrated looks on both elder women's faces. "Salamancer is enroute, luckily it was his day-off."

"Good, Salamancer can get Avian out of there the moment he steps out of the park. He's one of our best get-away drivers and I have yet to see him get caught. Inform Psionic of the situation too, he'll help out on what he can for the next month after this."

"Roger that big boss, also someone's pestering you. The boring you."

Kankri blinked before opening his other pesterchum account and groaned as he sees who was pestering him, "I have no time for this." He mutters as he answers.

casanovaAquaguy [CA] began pestering calmingGrievances [CG]

CA: yo chief

CA: uh, you there? i uh, vwanted to talk to ya for a moment

CA: about the vwhole, 'rejection' thing

CA: chief you there

CA: kankri? c'mon don't ignore me

CG: What do you want, I'm currently busy here Cronus.

CA: vwoah, you okay there chief?

CG: I am fine Cr9nus, like I said I am currently very 6usy at the m9ment.

CA: oh, is this about the rejection thing i did because that's vwhat i vwanted to talk to you about

CG: N9, it is n9t ab9ut the 'rejecti9n thing'. H9nestly I g9t 9ver that and m9ved 9n, I truthfully d9 n9t care any m9re ab9ut that and currently am 6usy s9 please g9 away. I have a lecture t9 listen t9 intently and a speech t9 prepare.

CG: G99dbye Cr9nus, we'll speak an9ther time perhaps.

CA: vwait, vwhat

CA: kankri vwait

calmingGrievances [CG] ceased pestering casanovaAquaguy [CA]

CA: dammit, okay fine. later then

casanovaAquaguy [CA] ceased pestering calmingGrievances [CG]

Kankri sighed in relief as he switched back to his other account, at the start he had been 'Crimson Kankri' but quickly switched back to 'Boring Kankri' as his actual friends called it.

"I see it was that guy you had a 'crush' on, what did he say?" Hal asked curiously as if he hadn't even read through his messages causing Kankri to roll his eyes and look at him pointed, "Alright, alright. Why did you choose that guy as your go to crush thing anyway? I know you have no feelings of actual infatuation for him and that it was all part of your civilian roleplay but why that guy of all people? The dude's a greaser wannabe flirt, I mean couldn't you go for, I don't know, the fairy boy? He at least seems cool to 'crush' on."

Kankri shook his head, "It was a spur of the moment, Porrim had cornered me into a tight spot and the words had just blurted out on instinct to

preserve myself from her clutches and as for why Cronus specifically, I had been cross with him and he had been on my mind at the moment so when I blurted out my 'crush's' name, naturally his name left my lips." He muttered as he remembered, grimacing. "Though I do regret it, I could handle their 'teasing' as they insisted, before just fine with my civilian persona but the added weight of the knowledge of my supposed infatuation with Cronus had certainly had my nerves fraying slightly at the seams. Cronus did not help with his rejection to my hypothetical feelings, and in front of everyone no less.

"Do not get me wrong, I only see Cronus as an associate at worst and a 'friend' at best but to shoot down my 'feelings' in front of everyone we know? That certainly had me seething for a bit for the gossip and reactions I had to deal with with my 'rejection'. Even my dear brother had something to say about it, going as far as to confront Cronus himself! I have never been so embarrassed as my civilian self as much as the moment my little brother 'protecting' my fragile emotions." Kankri told him dryly

Hal snickered, "Comedy gold." He muttered before shaking his head and focusing on the actual important matter on hand, "So, after this what happens next? Qrow's not going to like this one bit you know. His emotional state and stability had been rocky from the start and the meeting with the Striders will knock him off balance for a while, I don't know what will happen when he gets back..."

Kankri frowned as he looked back towards the footage of feet, easily seeing Qrow's shoes among the the others and it seemed that the shouting had stopped for a moment and everything seemed still and they were talking somewhat normally. He didn't really know the Davis brothers full situation but he knew enough that Qrow would be thrown off his self-built stability with the meeting of the Strider brothers, with the adults just kicking him off of it.

"Chances are he'll fall into recluse and avoid the outside world for a bit with the exception of you of course, I'll give him time to adjust but he can't keep to only himself and you forever. Missions will be piling up with the incoming meeting with the Mirthful Church and Qrow still has to face the Church's new Bard on the demands of the Lord and his Prince. You know of

the Makaras and their games, their civilian lives are almost the same yet so very different that even I was baffled to learn of their existence within our world like this back when I was first introduced." Kankri admitted as his mind was thinking miles per second for plans, possible back up plans and anything else that could help with the situation.

"Well its a good thing that Qrow went shopping for tons of shit yesterday, that and we got the alchemiter if we need anything else that can easily be alchemized or we'll just call you guys for anything else."

Kankri nodded, "Of course, a murderer I may be but I am not uncourteous." He murmured as he looked pointedly at Hal who nodded before cursing.

"Alpha twin Strider bros coming to contact with Qrow, this is going to be messy."

---

*Burning crimson red eyes stared coldly into black ones.*

*"You cannot be serious Diamonds, we had a deal." Crimson snarled as they stood in the dimness, Tetrarch standing to his left and Salamancer to his right, both standing as tall and straight as their leader but kept quiet on his orders. Across them were the Midnight Crew, Diamonds, Spades and Clubs, standing tall and not faltering at his burning cold gaze and scorn.*

*"A deal we're upholding, we're giving you two of our best assets in exchange for your support in the next territory war with the Felt." Droogs countered easily as he motioned back towards the two at the side, Qrow stood glaring at directly at Spades as Hearts kept a big heavy hand on his shoulder to stop him from doing anything foolish and besides him sat Hal on a chair, quietly observing the whole event. Both looked tired and slightly bruised and Qrow's face was unguarded by his usual shades.*

*Tetrarch snarled and spoke despite orders, "Best assets? I see nothing but a crippled child with a teenage boy besides him, best assets indeed." He faltered underneath the warning look Crimson sent him but luckily got no reprimand as the leader was thinking of the same thing.*

*Spades chuckled, "Look again smartass, the crippled kid's a goddamn robot and a smartass too." True enough with a closer look they could see the augmentations of the younger teen, Hal made his robotic parts glow brighter and showed them his cybernetic eyes on his shades but did nothing else afterwards. "The other kid now... Show 'em what you got punk." He commanded towards Qrow who sneered at him but winced at the tightened grip on his shoulder before he was pushed forwards towards them.*

*Qrow grunted and glared before shivering as bird-like wings began to protrude from his back, tinted in orange and they glowed softly in the dim darkness. His previously dark red eyes glowed orange with his wings and the three could only stare in shock at the teen with bird-like wings, actual wings for flight were a rare gift in their world and even then there were no reports of any wings being near bird-like at all, only insect butterfly-like.*

*"The kid's a natural flyer, best one as far as we could tell not to mention a good swordsman, good with knives too." Spades said, grin wide with contradicting narrowed eyes that were focused on Qrow who glared at him back. He could do nothing though, not when Hal sat besides Boxcars who laid a warning hand on his head, reluctantly the winged boy stood back and after a moment his wings disappeared back into his back and his eyes returned to red.*

*Crimson laid a calculated eye on Qrow before doing the same with Hal, underneath his skin and behind his eyes his blood sang and he knew what to do.*

*"Very well, the deal has been made. Relinquish your hold over the two and we will assist you in the next battle with the Felt." Crimson said and Spades gave a harsh chuckle.*

*"These two may be yours now you sufferistical piece of shit but they still owe us big time, nothing you can really do about that. We ain't gonna cash in the debt they have for us now but in the future maybe." Spades told them with a wide pleased grin, Crimson knew that the man was speaking the truth and merely nodded shortly.*

*Soon enough, Qrow and Hal were handed to Crimson and his men and the meeting was over.*

*In the car both Qrow and Hal heavily stared at him, trying to figure out what he was going to do with them. It was Hal who spoke first.*

*"So... What now?"*

*Crimson snorted and gave them a crooked smile after pulling down his face-mask and his eyes glowed crimson, "Now, you're both one of us. Welcome to the Shackled Sufferers."*

*His blood swirled in his veins and knew that the future was certainly going to be actively interesting.*

---

"That is enough from the both of you!!" Rose shouted as they got both blondes at a reasonable distance away from each other, "Both of you need to calm down right this instant!"

Reluctantly both calmed down, Dirk breathed as he stared intently at Qrow who muttered and shook off John, Rose, Jade and Nepeta and pointedly ignored the slightly hurt looks from Jade and John while Nepeta just silently stepped back. They would both talk about this later, now wasn't exactly a good time.

Rose grimaced at the small hurt looks John and Jade had as Dave shoved them off, his face was guarded stoically and his eyes were an undecipherable storm. This could not be their Dave, their Dave was more open than this and by now would be fuming indignantly like the teenage boy they knew he was even when he was a pre-teen way back then. But then... At the same time, this couldn't be anyone but their Dave seeing as he looked exactly like him from the shade of hair and eyes to body structure.

She cleared her throat, "Alright, now that we've all calmed down now why not just talk things over? Like civilized people in the modern ages. Dave--" "My name is Qrow."

Rose raised a brow at the name, a strange name to bear, "Qrow then." She amended, best to go with it then to go through another fuss which she made sure to send the others a look that said 'just go with it we don't really have a choice'.

"Look, just because I look like your dead friend does not mean I am him. I barely know you people, some of you I recognize cuz I saw you somewhere like in the papers but other than that. Nah, I don't think so." Qrow admitted, making a show of trying to find his glasses that were somewhere on the ground rather than looking at the stunned and hurt faces of his... former friends.

He jolted as his arm was grabbed and turned to see both John and Jade looking at him heartbrokenly, welp there goes his guilt-o-meter.

"That, that can't be true! Dave, don't you remember? I'm your best bro besides Dirk, John Egbert! We used to goof around a-and we played games and pranks and-" "And I'm Jade Harley! Your other best girl friend besides Rose Lalonde! You're Dave Strider our best friend in the whole world! The four of us were our own little group just like Dirk and the others and our guardians!"

Qrow bit his lip and looked downwards as he pried off the hand from his arm and only replies with, "I'm Qrow Davis, not Dave Strider. I'm sorry dude, but I don't really know you all." He turned back around and this time actually went to find his glasses, "Now where the fuck are my shades."

Dirk took a forwards step and was stopped by Jake and Jane from going further, "If you're not my brother then who are you?" He asked harshly, glaring at Qrow who looked at him for a moment, "Why do you look, sound so much like him? Especially with the fucking shades too."

Qrow sent him a look, "I don't know man, the rare genetical coincidence? I'm his doppelganger or something? I have no fucking clue," ~~Liar~~ "As for the shades thing, well sorry if my eyes are too freaky for normal people to handle. Red eyes are not normal dumbfuck and they're sensitive as hell to the light so excuse me for that, I thought you'd know that." *'Since your own brother has red eyes'* was left unsaid but Dirk knew and that made him fume more.



Jane gave him a look and went to calming him down as Jake noticed a certain pair of orange aviators on the ground near him, as well as Dirk's own pair of shades. He first picked up Dirk's shades before picking Qrow's, "Here uh, Qrow? I think these belong to... you?" He noticed something weird about the eye-wear, more specifically behind the orange lenses, it looked like... A mini screen of a computer? "Wha..." He jolted as the shades were snatched from his hold and back into Qrow's hands.

Qrow coughed and stiffly nodded at him, "Thanks, these are the only pair I got on hand." He quickly puts them on and is instantly hit with a wall of red text.

RA: I'm so fucking sorry about all this, actually Kankri is too.

RA: We're both so fucking sorry about all this.

RA: We did not plan this through and going with plan made it worse and about to get even more worse. Roxy spilled the beans.

RA: Salamancer is coming and will be waiting for you outside the park, he, he did say he was going to be a he the next few days right? He should be able to provide a good get away when they come and boy are they coming.

RA: You know exactly who I'm talking about bro and we're both passing out apologize like cheap cigars here, Kankri's willing to give you time off but we both know that's not going to last forever and then there's that thing we gotta do with the juggalo people and shit.

RA: I've stalled the Lalondes but the other two are going on foot and I can't do much about that so brace yourself captain, this is going to be a hell a hard and bumpy ride.

RA: I'd suggest running now and fuck the pleasantries, come home and we can both ignore the real world for a limited amount of time and deal with the repercussions at a later date and just watch SBaHJ films all throughout the fucking week.

RA: Bro you gotta unfreeze and leave now if you don't want an encounter wit

RA: Fuck, too late. They just entered the main park entrance and heading towards your current location. Go for one of the side entrances or exits, Salamancer's circling the area now.

*That* had Qrow going to a start.

"Shit, I gotta go. I got something I need to do." He says in a bit of a rush, anxious to leave right at the moment and it shows as he shuffles on spot.

It had been concerning when the moment D-Qrow put on his orange sunglasses that he froze for a moment, the concern was still there but turned to suspicion as he made a poor excuse to leave looking antsy and shuffling on the balls of his feet. Roxy narrowed her eyes in suspicion, he couldn't know that she contacted their guardians right?

"Look, it was somewhat okay meeting you all and whatever and I'll let this whole thing slide under the rug and be forgotten and maybe try another time to be more acquainted but I left my little brother at home alone and knowing him he's going to do something stupid or something soon so I should go. That and I need to go shopping for shit that we need and all that." Qrow rambled, turning around and heart thudding the moment he sees two figures bounding towards them from a distance.

"See ya later Gryffindor, Equius *let's do this again inamonthorso!*" He rushed as he starts running for his life just as he hears two voices shouting for him over the sound of protest coming from the others.

**"DAVE!!"**

"Qrow, *hold up!*"

"Wait, where are you going?!"

Last week before he had been getting some sweet cardio with all the running he did, and looks like he was going to get some more sick cardio

today. Jokes aside for the real heavy hearted shit, *he just can't keep doing this every time they show up.*

But he couldn't face them, *face him*. Not now, maybe not ever but definitely not now. Maybe he could've faced Dirk and the others better than he would have now with the on-the-spot plan Kankri had him pull but right now for the elder Striders? That was an early grave for him.

Qrow panted as he headed towards the exit, running as fast as his legs could allow and that was quite fast with the amount of exercise he's been focusing for his legs specifically at the start and the training Crimson had put him through. He could probably stand great against Nepeta on a good day in a race but still lose because Nepeta was built for speed and agility, the perfect one-hit assassin.

Unfortunately he wasn't really fast enough on foot for one Bro Strider, who quickly went further than him and blocked his exit. "*David Elizabeth Strider!*" Bro roared and he flinched, unused to Bro being so loud and open and *ohgodnonotnowplease*. He skids to a stop before quickly turning back only to see Alpha Dave with Dirk and the others coming towards him at a fast pace, he yelped as he was grabbed by behind by strong arms that held him in place and he was somewhat semi-hugged from behind.

"Got ya you lil' shit." Said a gruff voice and Qrow was a thread away from *breaking*, "Fuck, it really is you isn't it?" Bro asked shakily, which was wrong oh so wrong Bro's voice should not shake, would not shake, not unless he was **dyi--** Qrow's breath hitched and threw the memory away along with the sentence before struggling with fervor.

"*Let me go asshole! Shit, fuck, this is molestation! Cops, anyone, get this creep off of me!*" Qrow shrilled, starting to panic and panic *badly*. The others closed in, a flurry of concern and voices *everything was too loud* **and he was trapped**.

He had no other choice.

Quickly Qrow thought on his feet, he brought his foot up and hit Bro's forehead, narrowly missing from hitting the shades full on but knocking

them off along with Bro's hat and then swiftly elbowing Bro in the stomach as hard as he could. Bro grunted and wheezed in pain, his grip and hold on the blonde loosened and suddenly he disappeared from in front of Bro to behind him in a blur. He was actually faintly surprised he managed to flash-step away like that with his mind all jumbled up and panicking, but that was not really on his mind right now and quickly he made his escape.

"Holy shit, *what!*"

"Oh my god Bro, are you okay!?"

"*How did he!?*"

"I'm fine! C'mon, he's gettin' away!" Bro groaned as he rubbed at his forehead and ignored the pain from his stomach, waving off the concern and urged his brothers and the others to follow Qrow. They could think later when Dave, Qrow, *fuck the name he goes with for* now, his **little brother** was with them and explaining everything! Never mind the pain, never mind his shades and hat! Though he sees little Jane picking them up at the corner of his eye and mentally thinks to thank her later.

Qrow panted and wheezed as he was *finally* out of the park and by the road, he looks around quickly and looks for Salamancer. He doesn't have to look for long as he hears the loud car honk and sees a familiar large dark blue and black car coming in bound from the corner, "YO FEATHER FER BRAINS!!" A loud familiar voice bellows and Qrow faintly grins as the door of the car opens and a dark yellow gloved hand is hanging out for grabs.

"Get in brat, we're going shopping." He hears Salamancer's muffled yell from within the drivers seat as the car comes closer, skidding to a stop for only a moment but that moment is enough for him to grab the hand and get pulled into the vehicle.

"Boy am I glad to see your old face again." Qrow laughs at him, if a bit hysterically. A dark purple visor glows at him in greeting accompanied by a toothy sharp grin, "But I thought Casey was the one pickin' me up." Blue

eyes underneath a black hood greeted him and met his shaded gaze briefly from the rear mirror.

"I am but I was with the old coot when I got boss' orders, your lucky I was on my day-off and somewhat close to Prospit." Casey snorted, "And it's Salamancer on the job kiddo. And I'm a boy for the next few days remember? With the exception of my job as Miss Rosalina's chauffeur of course."

"Yeah, whatever..." Qrow sighed before jolting as the car engine revs and the vehicle *moves*, he's bumped back much to the snickering of the older man beside him but he's not paying attention to him as he makes the mistake of looking back towards the park exit.

A very bad mistake indeed.

He sees everyone looking at him, or more really the car, and looking so *sad* and *betrayed* and... *Fuck, Bro was missing his shades and his hat.*

Their gaze met unknowing for the other but Qrow's breath stuttered and his heart stopped for a dangerous second, honey-amber meeting shaded red and it brought *unwanted memories*.

He'd seen those same -butnotsamefuck- eyes dull and lifeless - likeashittasspuppet- facing towards him. Dull and lifeless, unguarded by black pointy shades which were covered in blood and somewhere that *was not on his brother's face*.

For an instant he's not Qrow but Dave and he sees his brother's corpse on Beat Mesa in the doomed timeline.

For an instant he's not Dave but Davesprite and he sees his brother's corpse on LOWAS in the alpha timeline.

For an instant he's not Davesprite but Qrow and he sees his brother's corpse, just his brother's corpse, his brother's corpse on the ground and dead.

He's gone and dead and dead and gone and...

He remains silent for the rest of the trip, unresponsive to the worried and concerned talk of Psionic and Salamancer even when the Lalondes are apparently on their tail but are successfully lost and they're heading back to home.

Home...

---

Hal grimaced as he jolts back awake in his brother's sleeping hold, it's been a rough few hours since he'd came back. Pratically unresponsive to anyone else but himself, he'd done what he could in comforting the elder Davis and now he had calmed down enough to sleep and had fallen asleep while having Hal in his arms as comfortably as both could get with his wings out and covering them both. He had been nearly falling asleep when he had gotten pestered by someone, well multiple someones but as he glimpsed on who it was he straightened and nearly woke his exhausted brother from his sleep and stilled.

timaeusTestified [TT] started pestering roboticAutomaton [RA]

TT: Who the fuck are you to Qrow Davis.

RA: What.

RA: Wait, who is this. Who gave you my chumhandle.

TT: I asked the questions here asshole, now answer it.

Hal grimace grew darker as he stared at the pesterlog, well shit, this was going to be *pleasant*.

## Chapter End Notes

Soo, next chapter is going to be angst and rage maybe. We'll be looking at the perspective of the others mainly as Qrow is so exhausted and broken as of now as well as to see more QrowHal brotherly pale interactions that lead to Qrow sleeping with Hal at the end there.

I hope you enjoyed the chapter and sorry it came out late like this, and sorry for others who were looking forward to my other stories but I was nearly finished with this and I just finished it today so it gets updated. Now I'll be focusing on my other stories whoes chapters are nearly finished or something.

Anyway, till next time! Comment on what you think, I like reading your comments despite not replying as much as I want to. Apologies if the chapter seems rushed and 'bluh' but, it was the best I could do with the shit I have at the moment.

I miss my laptop.

# Familial Concerns

## Chapter Notes

Hooo, this was a hard chapter to think of but I managed it :D  
Hope you enjoy and sorry for the long wait

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

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Hal frowned as Dexter left the room, leaving Qrow on their bed nest just as Hal had instructed. "Bro?" The half-human called out softly and sighed when the other didn't respond. With a small huff he climbed into the nest, dragging his body from his chair and unto the comfy surface which at first had been difficult when he first tried to do it by himself with his one and only limb but practice and sheer stubbornness helped him as he determinedly went by his brother's side.

Qrow said nothing as Hal sat by his side, blankly staring at the cieling underneath the orange shades. Though he twitched when Hal reached and took said shades of his face and turned to look at him blankly, "Eventually you're going to fall asleep and I'd think you'd sleep better without these things getting in the way." Hal grunted as he puts the aviators aside gently.

"Talk to me Qrow, or don't. Both options are totally available right now and there's definitely the third option of bawling your eyes out. Wanna cry on your little bro? I'm right here ya know, I won't judge the totally unmanly decision of unironically turning your eyes into an honest to gog waterfall." Hal rambled as he made himself comfortable beside the silent blonde.

"Like shit dude, let me be the shoulder your ass needs to drown with your unironic or maybe ironic salty as fuck tears. Let's make an ocean here, no really the liquid humans produce from their tear ducts contain a lotta salt so go ahead and make an ocean and we'll both be swimming in Davis made ocean water. Don't worry about my electrical techno body, I'm completely water proof remember? Got nothing to--" Hal was cut off as suddenly Qrow latched unto his side, hugging the younger blonde tight as his body shook



but no sound came from the elder. Hal didn't hesitate to wrap his only limb around his shaken brother.

"This might be a lot easier if I had my other arm with me, speaking of my other arm it should be finished by now. Hey, is my arm still being confiscated or what? Because this hugging ordeal could go a lot better if I had two arms doin' the hugging y'know." The only answer he got from Qrow was a face full of feathers as the other used his wings as another set of arms, pulling the automaton into a tight feathery embrace.

"Yeah, thought so..."

---

timaesTestified [TT] began pestering roboticAutomaton [RA]

TT: Who the fuck are you to Qrow Davis

RA: What.

RA: Wait, who is this. Who gave you my chumhandle.

TT: I asked the questions here asshole, now answer it.

TT: Who are you to Qrow Davis, what's your connection to him.

RA: Look jackass, I'm not in the mood to deal with you whoever the fuck you are. Who the fuck gave you my chumhandle

TT: Let's just say a mutual friend, there I answered your fucking question now answer mine.

RA: ...

RA: You know what? Fucking fine; Qrow Davis is my goddamn brother. There, happy now? Now leave me the fuck alone.

TT: Bullshit.

TT: He ain't your fucking brother, he's my brother.

RA: Oh goodie, one of my friends gave my chumhandle to a fucking crazy person. Ain't that just a great thing?

RA: Dumbass, Qrow is my big brother. No matter what you got to say to me he's my brother and right now he's freaking the fuck out because some dumbasses and psychos chased him out of the fucking park.

TT: His name is Dave Strider, and

TT: We aren't psychos and we aren't dumbasses. I was just fucking concerned for him, *\*we\** were concerned with him. If he's freaking out tell him we're sorry, maybe we could've handled that better but he's gotta come home.

TT: We all miss him, I miss him. For god's sake we thought he was dead for *\*\*years\*\**

RA: *\*\*\*\*You're\*\*\*\** one of the dumbasses that chased him out of the fucking park? And kept mistaken him for your dead bro? Fuck off.

RA: Stay away from my brother, you've done enough bullshit. Look, I'm sorry about your own brother and shit but Qrow is *\*\*\*my\*\*\** brother who just happens to look like your brother. A fucking doppleganger.

TT:

TT: I doubt that's the case, look it's all fucking complicated and shit knows what's happening but we know Qrow's connected to something huge that may or may not involve my "dead" brother.

TT: We're sorry for making him freak out honest, but we need his help or something. There's something big behind all of this...

RA: ...

RA: Look, the apology is accepted and shit but the bullshit of that conspiracy thing can go fuck off. Just like you can do after I block your ass.

TT: Hold up. Before you do block me, which I advise you not to. Did you not notice Qrow doing anything suspicious a couple of weeks ago? Acting suspicious? Getting mysteriously hurt? Anything?

RA: And your point is?

TT: So you have noticed? Aren't you curious and concerned for Qrow? On what he's going to act such a way as well as eventually get hurt?

RA: What my bro does is none of your goddamn business. If anything it should be \*my\* goddamn business and it is, it's a family business thing that you have no right to poke at.

RA: Now are we done here, I've got important shit to do. And one of those important shit to do is to make sure my bro doesn't have another breakdown, if you know what's good for you Dirk; you and your other dumbasses will stay away from us. For good.

TT: I, how the fuck do you know my name I thought you didn't know me.

RA: Goodbye Dirk, oh and tell Roxy her attempt to hack my shit is cute and all but she ain't getting pass my protections.

TT: The fuck

robotocAutomaton [RA] has blocked timaesTestified [TT]

---

Kankri sighed as he leaned back against the chair he was sitting on, across him sat Casey who was frowning deeply and staring at the table. No doubt he was thinking of the eldest Davis brother who remained unresponsive from the moment Casey and Dexter provided get away from the predicament at the park.

It got to the point that Dexter had to carry the teen from the car and into the factory where Hal had them put Qrow in their 'nest', normally Dexter would tease both about the subject but he had only nodded grimly and settled the teen on the admittedly comfy nest within their room. Hal nodded his thanks

and stayed with Qrow the entire time as the three stayed in the Davis' livingroom.

"I didn't think he'd have that bad of a reaction in the face of the Strider elders, especially Dereck Strider." Kankri murmured as he tiredly rubbed at his face, "It's in moments like these that I regret listening to my inherited blood instincts... Would father make the same mistake as I have Dexter?" He asked tentatively, for once in a while no longer acting as confident and sure as he normally acted.

The man huffed giving him a crooked smile, taking the purple visor off his face and placed it on the table as blue and red eyes looked at him with sad fondness. "Oh definitely, your dad made all kindth of mithtaketh with thothe powerth of hith. No matter the thituation though, he kept hith chin up and find a way to make that mithtake, *not* a mithtake but an advantage. Chin up junior, you're thtill young and you've got a better grip on the powerth than he had at your age. You'll find a way to get thhit together, you're KV'th kid after all, jutht look at what you accomplithhed already; not bad for a teenager." Dexter praised with a smirk.

Kankri gave him a thankful smile, though all three of them were slightly somber at the mention of his father. How he missed his father, if only the blood powers had told them about the damned *ambushed* then maybe... Unfortunately they didn't work like that, at least they didn't at the time. It seemed that putting his father into a fucking coma seemed like the best choice, which Kankri agreed with since the only other choice at the time was his father's untimely death but he wished the powers would wake his father up already.

A lot of things might've been easier for him had he woken up, that and he missed the old man and he wasn't alone in that aspect. A lot of people missed him, whether in the organization or not his father was a big figure in both worlds and had a lot of people following him one way or another.

Kankri could only hope he was following his father's footsteps in ways that he could be proud of him, earning the respect and eventual leadership of the Shackles Sufferers was no easy feat even though he was their original

leader's eldest son and even now there were some who doubted his leadership and skills even after he proved his worth years ago.

"So what now? Both AV's are out of commission for a while, the duo's still got some missions to do after their little break weeks ago. I take it they're going back to the board for the others then?" Casey asked, looking at both Kankri and Dexter.

Kankri nodded, "It'll shake their reputation a bit but they won't care, they never did really care for frivolities like that so yes. The missions they booked will be sent back to the board for the other members. Data as well, they both need another break and yes that's necessary. I will not have Avian go against the Makara Bard haggard and utterly unresponsive. That'll just frustrate us both and anger the Mirthful Church and again yes, it is necessary seeing as the Bard and Church exclusively requested Avian this time round." He sent them both a look, Casey sighed but nodded nonetheless while Dexter muttered his agreements.

"Good, Casey get the car ready. Dexter, I'd like it if you'd stay with them both until Qrow starts to get back on his feet? Or at least, back in the air. Karkat is no doubt awaiting my return tonight, if I put it off tonight then it'll warrant unwanted attention... again and I doubt I can use you as another excuse this soon." Dexter chuckled but nodded, putting the purple visor back on his face while Casey stood and went outside to bring the car around to send Kankri home.

Kankri tiredly shook his head as he thought back to the day, "Today was an unplanned disaster... I can only hope you are right Dexter, that I can turn this from a mistake to an advantage." He mutters tiredly before following Casey out of the room.

Dexter smiled after him, "You'll think of something. You're Kelvin's kid; the Second Crimson, you'll get it together." He said, lisp gone the moment the visor was back on his face. He turned back to the table and sighed before reaching into his sylladex and taking out his laptop, shaking his head and rotating his shoulders, he had work to do after all.

He was in for a long night.

---

roboticAutomaton [RA] began pestering arsenicCatnip [AC]

RA: Did you or Equius give them our chumhandles?

AC: it was equius

AC: sorry hal but i tried to stop him or at least stall him but i couldn't without looking suspicious

RA: It's fine, just got out of a conversation with Dirk. All the while with Roxy trying to hack into my systems, had she been the Roxy that I knew of she could've easily hacked into it but since she's this world Roxy the chance that she could even crack the first layer of my defense is an alarming 1.6% but the best that she could get out of that is our nonexistent internet files.

AC: impressive and all but what if she works together with the others? like sollux and dereck?

RA: Then they would be a more formidable opponent to go against but I'll be ready if they try that. Alternate timeline future knowledge, you have to remember that when you go against me.

AC: and wasn't that a bizarre thing to listen to? i'm still kinda doubting all that but then again, i can't really talk about the impossible.

RA: Exactly.

RA: Anyway what happened after Qrow escaped the park?

AC: a lot of things.

AC: after grow managed to escape, which i know salamancer and psiioniic helped judging by the lingering smell of scales and little psionic scent, everyone was bummed out and really upset over it. when the lalondes showed up the striders were instantly in their car and went chasing after grow and the others while the rest of us stayed behind

AC: while that was happening, rose, roxy and jane were questioning equius, sollux and i about qrow and eventually you too and not long after the lalondes came back with the striders. they lost salamancer's tail, which isn't much of a surprise.

AC: they questioned us again, trying to pry what we know about you two. i just followed equius lead and said what i knew, well what he knew anyway and then i went along with it. i didn't say anything very important or revealing of course but equius and i were forced to give out both of your chumhandles on pesterchum

AC: but i think we're going to have to keep a keener eye on the strilonde families, they're very sharp and i don't think they're convinced that i don't know anything else. they kept asking the right questions and i think they managed to convince the others to keep a closer eye on me.

RA: Of course they did... You going to be alright?

AC: i'll be fine. just gotta be more careful for a bit.

AC: how's qrow?

RA: Unresponsive for the most part. It's reminding me of the time when we were underneath the Midnight Asshole's 'ownership'. I don't like it but I can't do jackshit but be there for him until he get's wind back under his wings and fly again.

AC: and who's grand idea was it that qrow face roxy and the others in the first place? qrow had the chance to bail on equius and i, i'm sure of it.

RA: I'll admit that Roxy showing up with Sollux threw me off but I was totally on board having Qrow abscond the fuck outta there but Kankri appeared in our base and said otherwise, apparently the blood powers thought it was a good idea for bro to face Roxy at the time.

AC: oh you have got to be kidding me...

RA: Unfortunately no, this is no joke. Crimson is a great leader and all, and the blood power instinct thing saved our rumps plenty of times but I really hate the times when it backfires and it rarely does.

AC: ugh, i always hated the blood powers. ever since.... you know

RA: Yeah I do... How are they by the way? Any progress? Any signs?

AC: no, just like fucking usual no. they haven't made a twitch in the last month, everyone in the group says they'll wake up again but.... meulin lost hope, karkat gave up, my friends are doubting they'll ever wake up again and if it weren't for dexter and the others, the doctors would've pulled the plug years ago...

AC: meenah says its a waste of money... and she's not the only one too... meulin is almost of age and i'm scared that meenah or one of the others are going to convince her to...

RA: Woah hey now, calm down Nep.

RA: You know Dexter, Dammek and Kankri aren't going to let that happen right. Regardless if your sister reaches adulthood.

RA: If they say they're going to wake up then by fuck they're going to wake up, even though it's not going to be now or tomorrow but eventually. They're going to wake up and shit's going to be fine.

AC: ....

AC: :33

AC: :33 < yeah your right :33

RA: Damn right I'm right.

---

"Damn!" Dirk cursed as Pesterhum informed him about how 'roboticAutomaton' blocked him. "Any luck Roxy?" He asked as he moved away from his Pesterchum, currently they were all in the Strider living



room. His brothers were with both Rose and Roxy's mother in the kitchen while the rest of them were in the living room with the exception of Equius and Nepeta.

Both of them couldn't come with Equius' father calling Equius back and Nepeta informing them that she had some errands to run for her sister. Which wasn't a lie fortunately for Nepeta, she did have to do some things for her sister and she used them as a perfect opportunity to slip away from the group and talk with Hal herself, after doing her errand of course; she wasn't a slacker.

Roxy groaned, "Nope! Sol's right about this guy, his entire system is fuck tight! Tighter than Jane's tight ass attitude." "Hey!" Roxy grinned sheepishly at Jane who gave her a mock-glare of irritation. "But in all seriousness, I think Sol and I have to work together for this, maybe ask your bro's help too if it isn't enough." She continued with a frown, looking at her failed hack attack. Qrow's brother was good, really good, his systems were entirely alien to her and she was quite honestly looking forward to the challenge even if she had to get some help to crack it.

John, who was silent ever since the park, sighed loudly, "Now what? We found Dave, er Qrow... Now what do we do? He... he's different, he doesn't know us, you heard what he said! He knows jackshit about us!" He exclaimed frustratedly, "I don't know guys, he's giving me mixed signals. I feel like he's Dave but he's not? I don't know how to explain it..." He sighs again, smiling weakly at Jade who sat beside him on the couch.

"Something happened, something big. He is our Dave. But I believe he just doesn't remember us, possible amnesia? Or perhaps something else." Theorized Rose, beginning to pace on the carpet, "His stoicity made it hard to tell but perhaps he was lying about not knowing us? Or feigning amnesia, whatever happened years ago is obviously connected to all this but obviously we don't really know what happened years ago." She came to a stop, a grimace not only on her face but on the faces of the others as well.

Talking about what happened years ago was a touchy subject, D-Qrow's apparent resurrection didn't make it any easier. They had all seen Dave's corpse, they were there when it was *confirmed* that the blonde had died due

to extreme measures. Gun shot wounds? Bruised, slice and even more stab wounds? *Being impaled through the chest?* Extreme measures indeed.

Whatever happened, even the professionals were confused over about. Why go through such extreme lengths for a pre-teen? Even though Dave had been the youngest Strider such measures to go against the famous brothers were honestly over-kill no matter how much you despised any of them. Sure both Bro and D had some hate fans but had they hated the Striders so much to go to such lengths to spite them? At the time, they had believed so since their brother was being buried six feet under but now? They knew even less on the reason why.

In the kitchen, four adults stewed in frustrated silence in comparison towards the 8 teens in the living room stewing in grim silence.

Roxanne looked sadly at the three across her as she prepared glasses of whiskey for all four of them, they needed a drink. Badly.

"So, fucking close..." Bro muttered, gripping at the counter tightly, "We were so fucking close, only for shit to fuck up and have Dave *run away*... Again..." It had hurt, literally with Dave did those admittedly awesome moves on him but the fact that Dave had been running away from *them*. That had hurt more for the elders.

D accepted the offered whiskey glass and downing it in one huge gulp, ignoring the familiar warm burn in favor of looking down at the empty glass. "We're his bros, why the fuck would he run away from us?" He asked quietly to all of them.

No one had a clear answer.

Rosalina sipped her glass thoughtfully, thinking back to car chase.

Not to brag but her driving skills were quite good, good enough to navigate and tail the mysterious vehicle that aided 'Qrow' in his escape but apparently not enough to stay on that tail. Whoever was at the wheel of the car, she certainly respected them. She admittedly puts down the glass with more force than necessary, but next time she won't let them get away.

That thought aside, her thoughts go back to the information her daughter provided her after they came back.

"Whoever aided Dave, or Qrow as he seems to insist to take name, was someone that was skilled in get aways. A get away driver if you would... Qrow seems to be involved with something dangerous given to the fact on how James found him and the state of that bar." The thought of a teen being involved with something so dangerous had all four adults grimacing, they had did their own little investigation after their kids and James had told them about the incident and they did not like what they found at the place.

Was that the reason why his death was 'faked', was it really faked? It seemed too real to be an elaborate faked death. But that was just another question to be added at the ever growing list of mysteries that were surrounding the teen.

"What I want to know is this brother of 'Qrows'." Bro said bitterly, wordlessly thanking Roxanne for the refill of whiskey in his glass, "I know Dirk's gonna be messin' with the dude, in fact he should be doin just that right now. But I want to know the dude that has the balls to call himself a Strider's younger brother."

"Technically he isn't calling himself a Strider, Davis is their 'last name'." Roxanne corrected, sighing at Bro's pointed look of 'I Don't Give A Fuck'.

"Strider, Davis, Qrow, *whatever*. He's our kid brother, *our* brother. Doesn't matter what he says his name is, that kid was definitely Dave and whatever's going to happen; we're getting out brother back." D interrupted with a determined scowl, Bro sharing that scowl as they both clinked their glasses in a toast.

Rosalina and Roxanne shared a sigh but they didn't disagree with the two, Dave and Dirk were like the sons they would have had along with their daughters. All of the kids, they were *theirs* regardless of family or genetics, they were all family and like hell they were letting one kid get away from them.

Striders and Lalondes were possessive, protective and extra stubborn sons of bitches and you'd bet they'd get Dave or Qrow home and all of their questions answered. No matter what happened, they were going to bring him back. Kicking and screaming if they have to.

And there was a *lot* of kicking and screaming when they did, that and a lot of shit that they honestly did not expect.

But they were the Strilondes, they were not people you get to fuck with easily.

---

Nepeta sighed as she entered her room, pulling off her blue cat beanie and hanging it on her bedroom wall.

What an exhausting day.

She groaned as she launched herself onto her bed, curling up and hugging the giant cat plush she got as a Christmas present from Meulin. She twitches when she hears her laptop ping in her sylladex and sighs before opening the laptop and Pesterchum. It was Hal.

At the end of the conversation she's smiling as she puts her laptop back into her sylladex, jumping out of bed she opens her closet. Meulin was going to be out for tonight, she was staying at Kurloz' house and it would be the perfect opportunity to go out tonight.

She grins sharply as she puts on her personal face mask, it covered her entire lower face and the design made it look like she had two snarling mouths. Her hair fluffed up as she pulls the green hoodie over her head, her hair fluffing up to fill the two cat-like bumps in her hoodie, from around her waist comes her dark olive green tail, curling playfully in the air as she buckles the dark red belt and gave a pleased cat-like purr as she flicks her wrists, very pleased at the claw weapons she had gotten today.

When she looks in the mirror in her bedroom she sees not the cute Nepeta Leijon, but the deadly Huntress Leo-Lioness of the Shackled Sufferers. The symbol of the group stitched proudly across her chest, jagged chains curling

into an almost 69 shape, if it weren't for the jagged and broken look of the symbol one would have clearly seen it as the family Cancer zodiac symbol of Kankri and Karkat's family, Vantas.

It wouldn't be surprising to those who knew them seeing as the Vantas Family founded the group.

Though not many people knew that obviously.

She's out of the house not a moment later, scaling rooftops and heading towards the Shackled Base in the shadows as the sun sets. She needed a new mission to blow some steam off, that and she wanted to test out her new claws and break them in a bit.

Maybe she'll visit Qrow and Hal afterwards, who knows where the night would take her.

*Later on...*

"*Fuck...*" Nepeta curses as she's being stared at by a wide-eyed Rufioh Nitram and Horuss Zahhak, decapitated head in one hand and bloody claw in another.

"I should have taken a left... Apologies for ruining your date?"

It only got worse after that.

"C'mon Zahhak, Nitram, what's taking yo--WHAT THE GLUB?!" Shouts one Meenah Piexes from around the corner, along with the rest of her friends and one surprised Kankri who narrows his eyes at her. Well...

"Ah crap..."

Chapter End Notes

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

Oh dear, Nep's made a big mistake! What is up with everyone making

mistakes in this story? First it was Qrow then it was Hal, yeah I don't know what's going on.

Sorry for the long awaited update but life has been bluh to me for a bit. Expect the next update to be *much* earlier this time.

Hope you enjoyed! Bye :D

# Piece by Piece

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

---

--undyingUmbrage [uu] began pestering roboticAutomaton [RA]--

uu: HEY AGAIN DOuCHEBAG

uu: WHO IN THE FuCKING HELL ARE YOu?

RA: Gogdamit

uu: ANSWER THE QuESTION FuCKER, WHO ARE YOu AND HOW DOES MY SISTER KNOW YOu?!

uu: THIS WOuLD BE SO MuCH EASIER IF YOu WOuLD JuST TELL ME WHO THE FuCK YOu ARE!

RA: Ugh.

RA: Not in the mood to do this Caliborn, I'm busy

uu: DOING WHAT?! AND AGAIN HOW THE FuCK DO YOu KNOW MY NAME?! OR MY SISTER'S NAME?!

RA: None of you business, goodbye Caliborn.

uu: NO WAIT

roboticAutomaton [RA] has blocked undyingUmbrage [uu]

uu: GODDAMIT!

Message blocked

uu: ONE DAY I WILL FIND OuT WHO YOu ARE "RA", I FuCKING SWEAR IT.

Message blocked

---

Hal looked at his brother beside him, asleep to the world and currently tucked against his side. Qrow had finally succumbed to sleep and Hal shifted gently to make sure he would sleep comfortably on his side while Hal dealt with other things.

Currently he was monitoring a certain hacker, well *two* certain hacker's, progress on a specific thing he had made at the beginning before all of this happened.

Profiles that were hidden deep within the internet's database that contained information on both Qrow and him, nothing much obviously and it was only used for public appearances, Kankri has been adamant in them having at least one file on the internet and in the government's database to signify their small existence.

It was a small thing, very bare and very suspicious if one took a closer look at it but Hal made it seem as normal as any other person's file. Their existence in the database was useful in certain legal matters, like during missions where Qrow had to pose as a brief transfer student for a week or so but that only happened twice.

Qrow didn't need to be schooled, mentally and intellectually he already knew everything he needed to. He wasn't a techno genius like Hal but he was very smart, smarter than average despite the times he acts like a cool headed idiot. In fact he was very well verse in mathematics, a partial reason why he had gotten his old hash modus besides its perks of weaponizing itself as well as old rap battles; or so he told Hal one day.

He even proved it by solving a very hard algebraic problem, numbers just came naturally to him just like time and rhythm.



Anyway, it seemed that both Roxy and Sollux were on the move to find both Qrow and Hal's files. He toyed with the idea of just outright erasing their existence but that would trigger the government's systems, creating a file that was ignored was delicate work and erasing it completely was just as delicate if you didn't want anyone to know.

They were already too close for him to even start erasing so he just modified the files, ever so slightly and let both Sollux and Roxy get their information. Despite Kankri's apparent regret for Qrow's existence to be found out by the Strilondes, Crockerberts, and HarlEnglish families this soon, Hal had a feeling that it was actually the right choice.

He just *knew* something big was happening, something enourmous that would personally effect all of them. And he means *all of them*.

Whatever it was, it would hit Qrow first and Hal had to swallow his pride to fully admit that even he couldn't deal with the aftermath all by himself because it would hit Qrow *hard* and Hal was next. And Hal couldn't help his bro if he was hit next, not totally anyway and as much as he would dislike the idea it seemed that the others would be crucial during this time when both Davis brothers were down for the count.

Kankri, Nepeta and the others wouldn't be enough.

How he knew this, he doesn't know, he never knows but it's there, at the back of his mind itching.

But he doesn't care, as long as his brother was safe and okay in the end...

He'd do whatever it takes.

---

*"I leave for one minute and I find my kid as an orange angel ghost."*

*"Fuck off, ain't your kid. Your actual kid of this timeline is out doing his own thing."*

*"Mm, nah. Same dorky shades, same dorky face, y'er still my lil' man, lil' man."*

*"Ey! Don't diss the shades, they're cool as fuck and you know it. Also, not a dork, that's Egderp's title. King of dorks, dorkiest dork of all dorkdom. Dork's such a dork I can't believe he's a dork sometimes."*

*"Mm, and the whole orange angel ghost?"*

*"Sprite prototyping... I'm, Davesprite. Just call me Davesprite."*

*"That's a sucky name, I'll stick to the name I gave ya when I found ya. Timeline shit of whatever, your still my dumbass little brother."*

*"Man, I forgot how much of an asshole you actually were."*

*"...Were?"*

**BloodbloodwherewashisshadesfuckNOIR**

**"..."**

---

"I found 'im! Took shit ton of time but I got him!" Roxy called out as she stumbled into the room with her laptop, "Had to help Sollux out and he helped me but we managed to get Qrow and his bro's file, shit was encrypted as fuck though so sorry for the long wait." Roxy said as she plopped on towards the couch with a tired grin.

It was the next morning, Jane and HarlEnglish duo went home last night despite the Strider's offer for them to stay. All Lalondes accepted the offer along with John who got permission from his dad to stay in the big apartment.

Rosaline took one look at her daughter and frowned, "You need sleep Roxy." She said as she and the others gathered to the living room at Roxy's declaration, Roxanne agreeing with her and urging her niece to sleep.

Roxy scoffed, "Mom I'm fine! This isn't the first time I pulled an all nighter, though I will admit that my brain is tired because this shit was *hard* to decode and un-encrypt. Like, seriously, these are public files! How did the government not notice them?! Well then again I didn't notice them until I really went and *looked* with Sollux's help but here!" She rambled before declaring and turning her laptop to face her family.

"Davis info from freaking internet database! We finally know who 'RA' really is!" Roxy exclaimed with a proud grin.

The Striders, Lalondes and one Egbert leaned in to read eagerly.

"Qrow and Hal Davis?" John read aloud.

"Qrow 'Katherine' and Halexander 'Velvet' Davis." Rose corrected in a deadpanned with a quirked brow. Female middle names, just like the Striders; how interesting...

"Qrow's birthday matches with Dirk's, the only things different is the year. Says here he's a year older than ya." Bro said with Dirk scoffing.

"He wishes! Always gonna be the lil' bro, lil' bro."

"And it *also* says here 'Hal's' birthday is the same of *both* Qrow *AND* Dirk." D pointed out, "December 3, but he's just, years younger. He's goddamn 13 years old!"

Roxy sputtered, "What?! So you mean both Sollux and I have been having trouble hacking a fucking pre-teen all this time!? Oh man, Sollux must be *soo* mad right now." She snickered but was inwardly very impressed, Hal was a teen genius! If only she knew the truth...

Roxanne frowned as she took control of the mouse, "There aren't any photos in this file. Not one of Qrow *or* Hal, Roxy's right, how did the government *not* notice these files?" She turned to her niece, "You said they were encrypted and coded?"

The younger Lalonde nodded and took up a serious face, "Yeah, heavily so. But in the way you'd think there was nothing wrong with the files. As for the photos, there are no photos for Hal and for Qrow but there was this code in the file that made the government's system *think* there were photos in there and that the file was there for years."

John sighed, "Well at least we know Qrow's little brother's name."

"It's not enough, I want to know what Hal's face looks like so we can go find him." Dirk growled as he looked at the files, Bro and D were right behind him, determined to have a chat at Qrow's 'brother'.

Rosaline sighed and shook her head, "Unfortunately that won't happen for a long time it would seem, you do recall the admittance of both Equius and Nepeta; Hal stays inside their home for most of the time working on a project of his and the adress of their home is not on the file."

Roxy hummed, nodding in agreement with her mother, "Yeah, both Sol and Equius told me about Hal's little project. Well, 'little' being a understatement. They don't know what it is but it's involving technology from what Equius told me, he and Equius technobabble each other a lot." She admitted, thinking back to the slightly confusing technobabble Equius told her from time to time with the mentions of RA or as of now Hal throughout his ramblings. "Whatever it is, it's big. Like, really big. Equius told me that Hal told him that he was recently done with only *a third* of his project and he started it months ago!"

Both Dirk and Bro narrowed their eyes but seemed interested in this mysterious project along with Roxanne who hummed in thought, they were always the more technological batch of them. Well them and grandparents Harley and English.

"Does anyone else know or talk to RA besides Nepeta and Equius?" John suddenly questioned, gaining attention as he looked to be in thought, "I mean, it just can't just be Nepeta, Equius and Sollux right? There's gotta be others, maybe they can help a bit."

---

-- shackledCrimson [SC] is pestering leadLioness [LL] --

SC: That was incredibly risky Huntress not to mention very sloppy and reckless

LL: I know...

SC: We've already had Avian in the spotlight with one side, we don't need you of all people in another

LL: ...

SC: We're all edging here Huntress, right at the very end and though it's not going to last I would prefer to be more in control over the situation and prepared

LL: My apologies sir but I had no choice, it was one of the Felt that forced me into the situation.

SC: Tell me what happened

LL: Well

---

It should have been an easy mission.

Nepeta grinned underneath her masked as she slinked into the shadows, the mission was easy enough.

A simple Cut and Spread mission, with the target cut down and spread thinly but evenly among his allies as a warning.

Said target was a random guy she never heard about making too big of unstable waves within the underworld and was way over his head, not to mention incredibly rude and nosy from what the files told her. His skills in combat were a little above average but nothing she couldn't handle, she's taken down far worse and stronger opponents than him.

He was a little interesting in choice of weaponry and ability, he had the uncommon ability of gravity at his disposal but no matter since it could only effect inanimate objects and he could only control it for so long and his range isn't amazing to ponder over. His choice of weapon would be a chain ball, which would sort of make sense with his gravity-defying ability but Nepeta just saw it as a hilarious weapon but an interesting choice.

She couldn't wait to test her new claws on him.

She arrived at the base, silent as ever and slipping right through their abysmal security and easily sneaking into the main office where the target was.

As expected of her, she did her job and fatally injured him before giving him *The Choice*, which he predictably accepted and got killed. Honestly she was disappointed, she knew he was below her level but she had been expected more of a fight and less grovelling, but then again her reputation exceeded her and she was one force to be reckoned with.

The underworld was still probably reeling at her apparent victory over the Church's Mithril Mirthful Prince, granted it had been a tag team effort with Qrow but it had been quite the spectacle and though the Prince was fond of her and was somewhat shocked to know she was involved with all this he had *not* been lenient in his blows and attacks.

It was her own skill and Qrow's support that kept her from being forced out of the underworld as well as not in a wheelchair in that fight, it was brutal and like she said; that though the Prince had been fond of her for obvious reasons should people have known the relationship he had with her and she with him, and though the Prince was not aiming to *kill* per say, he *had* been aiming to cripple or fatally injure.

She was glad that the mess between them cleared up after their battle, it would've been annoying to keep him off her back in both lives.

Kurloz loved her like a little sister and loved Meulin dearly, he had not been approving at the start to find out she was involved with this whole dilemma

but reluctantly accepted it as a fact as Nepeta proved herself to him that she deserved to be in this place.

Better her than her sister she had thought all those years ago, staring at Meulin who begged their mother to wake up and crying her heart out.

Meulin was too soft and kind-hearted to be a Huntress. Her disability could have easily been overlooked and even used as an advantage or perhaps maybe even fixed at one point, but it was their mother's choice and she had been right. Had Meulin been raised the way of Nepeta....

She refused to think more on the subject.

Anyway, just as she was about to store the head of the target in her sylladex then go for the rest of the body for later use of the mission, something unexpected happened.

---

LL: I didn't know that the group was in contact with the Felt, or maybe it wasn't. Whatever the reason; one of the main Felts showed up, breaking into the room all cool-aid man style.

SC: Cans I would take it

LL: Yes

SC: That's strange. The informants would have told me if Cans of all people came back into the city, just a few days ago they had informed me that Cans was doing business abroad in Japan.

SC: He is one dangerous moron and one to keep a close track of

SC: I would take it that was the reason why you were in that alley?

LL: ... He caught me off guard, I would have dodged really but

---

The huge man had just, **broke** right through the wall! All, cool-aid man style!

Cans was a towering large figure, shaved bald underneath his red pool ball themed hat. Green suit stretched and custom made to fit him and *not* rip apart the moment he moved. Skin a dark tanned brown and eyes a furious dark grey.

One of the most feared members of the group with his intimidating build and rare and *very* powerful abilities.

The ability to punch someone either backwards, forwards through time as well as to another location.

It seemed random at most points, it was a confirmed rumor that he can't really control the amount of energy in his punches nor control where and when the punched victim ends up. Kankri had been one unfortunate victim in the past and not for one time either, the latest incident; he ended up in the past, at *school* no less in full Crimson regalia at the pinnacle of his rise to leadership.

He hid but was spotted by a few witnesses that he could not silence without consequence, his past self helped hide him in suspicion to what was going on and Kankri clearly remembered the time Crimson appeared in his school a bloody mess and causing panic to the entire campus and school.

He eventually came back to his own time after a day or two, no matter what happened with Cans' punches the victim always returned to the time they originally were. Unless the victim was sent to only another location in the same time period and not in the past or the future that is.

She had been ready to just injure the man and run, though she was perhaps a slightly higher level than Cans, his ability was not to be underestimated in the slightest.

"Your going to thank me later for this Nepeta Leijon, you and your other little shits. Be sure to get little Karkat a good fucking teacher."

That stunned her for a bit and it was enough for Cans to *punch* her right into the wall.



Of an alley.

She got punch-ported into an alley, and the head of the target was in front of her rolling from when she dropped it at the impact with said wall.

---

SC: ...

LL: ...

SC: ... continue

---

Nepeta groaned as she got up, back aching from the impact. Surprisingly enough it seemed that Cans had held back on his punch for her, why, she had no idea but she had been punched as well as experienced attacks that were way more painful from the punch by Cans and she's heard rumors that he punches at *least* as hard as Kurloz! And she had experienced Kurloz's punches.

She hissed irritably and a bit confusedly as she remembered what Cans had said to her before he clocked her, her mind going to her half-brother. Karkat had no part in this, only Kankri and her were involved in the family business, and both would prefer to keep it that way.

Karkat *would* know about it, eventually but in no way did Nepeta or Kankri want him involved in this whole thing. He and Meulin deserved to have normal lives while they would deal with problems in the shadows. It was how their parents wanted it to be, or at least both Nepeta and Kankri had suspected before they had gone into a coma.

It was why Kelvin advised Leonor to have Nepeta take her place, blood instincts he had told her the day she contemplated in training a new Huntress.

Not once did Nepeta think bad of him for his decision, the training was harsh but she had fun and enjoyed it and when she finally took the mantle

of her mother she had been *thrilled* and if their mother could see them now she knows she would have been proud of her.

And she would hear her mother say it when she would wake up from her damned coma.

With slitted eyes she growled and glanced at the severed head before taking it in hand after flicking one claw closed. The other claw was bloodier than the other since she had used it to decapitate the man, she looked left to right before slinking right and flicking the remaining dripping blood off of one claw to the wall beside her and continued her glaring at the severed head she kept out.

She should've just shoved it into her sylladex in retrospect but she was too annoyed and thinking too deep to do it.

It was the hitched and feared gasps that took her from her train of thought, head snapping and glaring dangerously with her stance shifting akin to a lion about to pounce; only to falter as her heart pounded as she stared ahead of her.

"Fuck..." Nepeta curses as she's being stared at by a wide-eyed Rufioh Nitram and Horuss Zahhak, decapitated head in one hand and bloody claw in another.

"I should have taken a left... Apologies for ruining your date?"

It only got worse after that.

"C'mon Zahhak, Nitram, what's taking yo--WHAT THE GLUB?!" Shouts one Meenah Piexes from around the corner, along with the rest of her friends and one surprised Kankri who narrows his eyes at her. Well...

"Ah crap..."

---

LL: And that's how I got there in the first place

LL: What happened next, you were there for most of it

SC: Yes I recall quite clearly...

---

Nepeta took a step back at the brief *very* pointed stare Kankri gave her before perfectly morphing his face into horror, great acting skills there boss she thought faintly to herself as the others gasped or screamed.

Quickly she counted, on Nitram, one Zahhak, one Piexes, one Vantas, one Maryam, one Pyrope and one Ampora. All first generation children, aka the elder siblings.

Shit.

"H-Holy shit..." Cronus whispered as he and the others took in the sight of the bloody murderer. They were small for a murderer, claws that were very bloody in one hand and a severed head in another, the dim lights not helping their fear as the murderer's *slitted eyes* practically glowed in the dark, a solid olive green.

Latula took notice first, "Oh fuck! She's a Shackled!" She cried out hysterically, recognizing the symbol on Nepeta's jacket. How could she not? Her mother was one of the authorities that kept trying to catch their group which always managed to avoid their clutches somehow or kept breaking out before they could interrogate them.

They all took a step back in fear, inwardly Kankri was mentally cursing in every language he knew of as he was torn in scolding Nepeta for her recklessness and acting like the scared civillian he was. He had a facade to upheld currently so the latter was quickly put on hold for later.

Though he couldn't help but take notice on Porrim's instinctive protective grip on his sweater as he was pulled back closer to her. Inwardly he scoffed but went along with it, again, civilian facade.

Horuss trembled as he was taken into Rufioh's arms, the elder Nitram's face narrowing and hardening at the sight of Nepeta and she along with Kankri

inwardly sighed.

Oh great, now they were going to be pestered by the Lost Dreamers and possibly the Web Gamblers. Maybe even *more* than them as well. This was *not* going to be fun.

At least for Kankri mostly as Head and Leader of the Shackled Sufferers, he would have to mostly deal with them all when they come.

He was already dealing with the Mirthful Church this week, *again*, why not add more groups to the list?! Ugh...

Nepeta moved, she flung the head into her sylladex and turned the other way. Sheathing her claws she hightailed right out of the alley and into the darkness, leaving a group of frightened and confused teens behind.

---

LL: What happened after I retreated?

SC: The others were predictably frozen for a few minutes before Rufioh broke them out of their stupor.

SC: I will admit, the Summoner has trained him well in terms of leadership I suppose but I still think it was rash to appoint him as the leader of the Lost Dreamers so quickly when he's only been training Rufioh for a handful of years now, and with little experience as well.

LL: Mmm

SC: Father has trained me since I was little and I had more experience than Rufioh by the time I was 10. I only took leadership because of the...

LL: I know, I don't know what Jasper is thinking but I hope Rufioh won't do anything rash.

SC: This is Rufioh we are talking about, he's not rash but he isn't experienced either.

SC: We shall see, besides, Rufioh will not be alone since he has Jaspers as his co-leader. At least the Summoner was smart enough not to let Rufioh go off on his own.

LL: Mhm, what happened next?

SC: Well, after that the predictable freak over happened. They were too busy thinking of you to notice my silence, though I wasn't silent for long as I did my oh so famous 'Insufferable lecturing' when they suggested a rather...

SC: Idiotic idea.

SC: Though this time, I wasn't alone in my lecturing.

SC: Meenah wished to follow you and or capture you.

LL: What

SC: An absurd idea I know but she was instantly shot down by Porrim, Rufioh and myself

SC: Though knowing her stubbornness she will try to anyway so keep an eye out for any sign of Peixes activity

LL: Alright

SC: It would like we will have to prepare sooner rather than later however for our apparent reveal of identity. This event will surely trigger something, and this time I would like to be prepared

SC: Qrow getting caught was one thing, you another. I have a feeling both are connected somehow, and I will have to schedule a meeting with the Felt about Cans.

SC: Things are going to get more difficult for us, that most I certain.

SC: At any rate you will be going under probation for a while, let things steam over for a bit and then return to duties like normal.

LL: What?! But Crimson!

SC: Decision is final Huntress, besides I'd rather you go help Avian for a bit. Assist Aviator as well

LL: Oh, alright.

SC: If you haven't completed the Cut and Spread, hand the task to someone else in the group. The mission price shall be cut between you and that someone.

LL: I handed it over already, the body's been collected and should be spreading as we speak.

SC: Good.

SC: We'll discuss more in the morning, or rather after your visit to Avian and Aviator.

LL: Yes Crimson

--leadLioness [LL] ceased pestering shackledCrimson [SC] --

---

Kankri sighed as he walked down the stairs, intent to get some water and perhaps something else before bed.

It was late so he narrowed his eyes at the sight of his brother Karkat in the kitchen looking grimly at the screen of his phone, he straightened and put on a scolding face.

He entered the kitchen and coughed to gain Karkat's attention, "Karkat, what are you doing up? Are you not aware of the needs someone your age needs to suffice in order to have proper bodily function? Teenagers of all ages need an average of nine to nine and a half hours of sleep. In fact, resting properly can improve your mood, make you feel more energized, and therefore improve your overall academic performance. You really shouldn't be staying up so late." He was about to continue and hopefully repel his

younger brother back to his bedroom and into bed to sleep when Karkat angrily turned to him and interrupted him.

"When the fuck were you going to tell me?!" For a tense moment Kankri thought he was talking about the family business, that Karkat somehow found out on his own. Then Karkat continued, "Why didn't you tell me that you and the other fucks encountered a fucking *murderer*!?" He shrilled and inwardly Kankri sighed in relief.

Outwardly Kankri kept quiet for once, too relieved inwardly to do anything.

"And not even a normal goddamn murderer but a fucking *Shackled Sufferer*!!" Thus began an angry rant from Karkat as Kankri tried to calm him down.

He had time, he'll prepare for the real trouble when eventually Karkat and possibly the others find out the truth.

---

In the lab, a lone box sat on a table.

Within the shadows a lone figure leaves the room as the box lays still, a beat, it trembles as a bright lavender mist left the box from the slightly open lid which faintly sounds with a vicious harsh snarl and howl. The box closes shut and the mist leaves the room, an echoing voice whispers.

"Striiiiideeeeer..."

Chapter End Notes

WELCOME TO 2018 STUBBORN FLOCKS!

Here's the update, sorry it took like a whole goddamn month :P but hey! SF is now in 2018 and theres more backstory on Nepeta :3

And whats with the mist?! Anyway, thanks for reading and I hope you enjoyed!

# Cheshire Smile

## Chapter Summary

Well... this is a predicament, an amusing one but a predicament nonetheless.

It seems that things will be quite harder from now on, but I will no less try to help and entertain myself as was planned anyway.

:3

Curious though... They, or rather he now, cannot remember me... and he is missing his other half.

## Chapter Notes

They're here, they're there, they're everywhere with that stupid ass smug grin!

Rose hates their guts and they're amused as fuck, who is it?

-----

Heya! Finally got a chance to update this story as well, school is almost ending for me guys so hang on tight! After that, updates are gonna come in much earlier and not as far apart now and I may even be able to get some new stories out and about!

Hope you guys enjoy~~

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

-- roboticAutomaton [RA] is pestering twinArmaggedons [TA] --



RA: You know, I would have thought you would have pestered me now that you knew my name.

TA: oh my god

RA: What is it Captor, embarrassed that a supposedly 13 year old is playing you like a puppeteer?

TA: 2hut up hal

TA: actually that felt kiind of better now that ii know your 2tupiid a22 name

TA: and what the fuck do you mean by '2uppo22edly' iit 2ay2 2o riight here you are a 13 year2 old jacka22

RA: Tsk tsk Sollux, you know how easy the government servers are to hack by geniuses like us.

RA: I will admit though that the name on the file is entirely real, the bio is as bare as I could stretch it, but the age... that's something I didn't choose

TA: what the fuck are you talkiing about, how doe2 one... you know what, fuck iit, ii dont care anymore about the 2tupiid fiile and the admiitiion of you hacking the government 2erver (unfortunetely ii gotta giive the well de2erved praii2e, iimpre22iive move diick head) or your goddamn age. 2tep one, gettiing your 2tupiid name ii2 done, 2tep two ii2 goiing iinto motiion

RA: And that would be?

TA: fiinding out what your face look2 liike 2o ii can fiinally know iit then 2tep three, fiinding out where the fuck you are whiich leave2 u2 wiith the fourth and fiinal 2tep: \*\*\*punchiing tho2e 2hade2 riight of your 2tupiid face\*\*\*

RA: Oh good luck with that Sollux.

TA:2hut up hal

TA: ...

TA: hey 'davii2'

RA: I have a good suspicion on what this conversation will now turn upon but alright, what is it Captor?

TA: that guy, grow at the park. he's your bro.

RA: Yes

TA: how

RA: Well when a mommy and a daddy love each other very much...

TA: \*\*\*cut the bullshitt 'dave's' what the fuck is going on with this whole shit\*\*\*

TA: i am not some chump a fucktard that sits on his ass all his fucking life thinking nothing about the bullshit around him. i am a fucking genius just like you said hal.

TA: something big's involved with this, i just know it because that is not your brother

RA: Solux

TA: that guy

RA: shut up

TA: he's dave triider, dick's bro

RA: Wrong, he's Grow Davis. My big bro.

TA: oh sure he can be that too but he's definitely dave triider the once \*\*\*\*\*DEAD\*\*\*\*\* kid brother to the infamous triider duo and twin two techno teen prodigy. emphasis on the DEAD part. what the fuck happened

RA: Nothing happened.

RA: And even IF something did, it is none of your business.

TA: none of my business probably, but dick is my friend and he's freaking the fuck over this. So are the others and pretty much me two and

thing2 could be 2o much more ea2iier for everyone iin thii2 iif you would ju2t tell u2 what happened and what the fuck ii2 goiing on.

RA: ...

TA: hal

TA: what the fuck happened to dave

RA: he is not dave strider. He is Qrow Davis, my big brother and we don't know what happened to Dave Strider, \*\*\*no one does\*\*\* and that's that.

RA: Anyway, looking forward to your next hax bat attempt Sollux, now that you know my name things might even get easier for you in the next time you try at my systems.

TA: hal dont do thii2, dont make thii2 even more diifiicult than iit probably already and totally ii2

RA: I'm not. Everything would be fine if you all would just leave us alone and mind your own businesses. No one needs to complicate things even more, just keep to yourselves and everyone wins.

RA: Goodbye Sollux.

-- roboticAutomaton [RA] ceased pestering twinArmaggedons [TA] --

TA: hal waiit!

-- roboticAutomaton [RA] has blocked twinArmaggedons [TA]! --

TA: you diidnt

Message failed! User has blocked you.

---

"Thhit." Sollux muttered as he leaned back on his chair. The troubled hacker stared at the screen before giving a near growl and exiting the chat-site of Pesterchum, well *that went well*, his mind sarcastically supplied as he pulled up the file he had finally found just a few long ass hours ago with the help of Roxy.

He stared at the bare file before closing it again, fidgeting in his seat.

Everything made no sense. None at all. And genius he was, even the smartest person in the world would be stumped if they had nothing to work on; what he and the others *did* have to work on was the following facts.

***Dave was somehow fucking alive, after being quite literally dead for years.*** There could be no faking that brutal death, not when the Striders checked, double-checked, triple-checked, *quadruple-checked* on the facts that made Dave dead. And yet there he had been, in the park grown in age as if he had never died in the first place. He was torn between facts and decided to leave that for last.

***Dave Strider denied being Dave Strider and insists on Qrow Davis.*** For reasons why, they don't know, and wasn't that an aggravating repeating sequence in all of this?

***'Qrow Davis' is trying hard to avoid them all.*** Okay, Sollux, *might* make sense of this if it had been a stranger or like an unlikely doppelganger but no, this was Dave Strider in all his non-dead-ass glory avoiding the friends and family he had spent his entire life with.

***Hal Davis insists on Dave being HIS older brother.*** Whoever Hal was, he was obviously close to Dave, or Qrow enough to consider him as *his* big brother. Something he says and insists all the time. And by the looks of things, Qrow does consider Hal as a younger brother but how and why?

***Hal stayed hidden while trying to hide Qrow as well.*** Which perhaps explains on how Qrow managed to avoid being seen all these years? During the years at some point Qrow met Hal and they became close enough to call each other siblings, and for whatever reason Qrow avoided the Striders until recent developments and things escalated from there.

Sollux brooded and was about to think of another fact when his door was kicked open with a loud cracking **BANG**.

"**THOLLUX HOLY THHIT!!**"

"M-Mituna?! Dude! You need to thtop breaking into my room like that, did you fucking break my door handle again?! Bro, not cool, and don't jutht do that out of the blue!" Sollux snapped only to pause as he looked at his brother's form.

Mituna was pale, slightly shaking as he looked at Sollux with pained, confused and wide eyes that showed a massive amount of fear. Sollux sat straighter as Mituna stumbled towards him, practically falling into the lap of his younger brother. "Oh god, MT are you okay?!" Sollux asked frantically as he took in his shaking brother.

"T-Thollux, *oh god I think the otherth and I nearly died tonight.*" Sollux stilled and demanded for his brother to explain.

At the end of Mituna's slightly stuttered explanation Sollux was just as pale as Mituna had been when he kicked down the door to his room.

The Shackled Sufferers.

One of the top mafia-esque gangs around, rivalling against the Midnight Crew, the Felt, and other high-end gangs out there even though it was only a couple of decades old compared to the other gangs.

If anything it was mostly an almost vigilante-like organization as they seemed to dislike certain dark stuff that other gangs thrived on, like human slavery, forced prostitution and rape, they despised it and even made a point of having no such thing around the area of their main bases and even sabotaging multiple slave rings, rape gangs and more. But other things like drug smuggling, assassination and murder was alright in their books.

"I, where'th dad?" Mituna asked hoarsely after his babbling explanation. Looking a bit better as he sat down properly on the floor of Sollux's bedroom.

Sollux sighed, "He'th out, thome fuck metthed with one of the big therverth at work tho he'th bein uthed overtime to fix the major problem." His dad worked in a place of idiots, well paid idiots but idiots all the same.

Unknown to them both the work place was a mostly cover-up company that served as one of the Shackled Sufferer's public and hidden investments, and that night he had been at the Davis' base even though yes he did have to check on the servers at the original base to make sure the systems were running as smooth as ever.

One can never be too careful or paranoid.

"... Thol, please don't tell dad about this." Sollux snapped to look at his brother with an incredulous face.

"Are you *crazy*?! Dad doesn't even have to know what the fuck happened to you and the other! Won't the other be telling their parents too? *Ethpethially* Latula?!"

Mituna shook his head, "No. It was decided that no one was to tell the adults about it. I don't know why but it surprisingly enough it was *Rufioh* who told us to do that."

Sollux sent him a look, "And you *all* agreed on that? Even Latula? That, wait, why are you even telling me this then?" And he deadpanned at Mituna's sheepish look. "You weren't supposed to were you?"

"Nope! But... I'm kinda glad I told you Thol, I... needed that calm down before I-well, you know." Sollux softened the look on his face at that and sighed and patted his big brother's scalp.

"Yeah whatever, but if this thing happens again *we are telling dad*, no matter what anyone says, got it?"

Mituna nodded in agreement, giving the younger Capter a wide smile before frowning in concern. "You okay there Sollux? You don't look too hot, even before I told you about the thing. What's wrong? What happened?"

Sollux wondered if he should or shouldn't tell his brother about what else was happening, but then again, Mituna was a stubborn brother and would

eventually weedle out anything from his younger brother sooner or later and he had a feeling sooner was a better choice than later.

"Okay, tho get thith..."

---

"I do not think this is a good idea at this moment... you sure you're alright bro?"

Qrow sighed, "Yes, I'm good. Just gogdamn peachy Hal, and I won't be gone for long, I just... need to spread my wings for a bit, like usual. I'll just stick to the area I promise."

Hal sent him a look but sighed, it had been a few days since the incident and the entire time his elder brother had stayed firmly on the ground, even pushing the limits in hiding his wings for whatever reason. Honestly Hal was surprised he hadn't asked sooner since he usually took flight every single day for a period of time, being in the air for Qrow was a sense of freedom and to be frank, Hal had been a bit worried when Qrow stayed in his room within his nest instead of heading out to fly.

"Alright, but come back soon. If anything happens, press the goggles and I'll answer." Hal had finally implemented the call upgrade that would let Hal's voice be heard from the goggles if the situation needed it, like weeks before during the deal with the Midnight Crew. It functioned just like a phone call, and speaking of the Midnight Crew; he and Droogs finally finished the deal and now Qrow was debt free from the gang of cards.

Though Qrow would have to steer clear from Slick for a while, and probably Snowman but who knows with her, some say she's amused with the action Qrow took against Spades and others say she's annoyed. You can never know with her but it was better safe than sorry.

Qrow grunted, putting on his coat and scarf and securing the newly-upgraded red goggles on his face. "Roger that lil bro, later."

Hal watched him take flight, and continued to look his direction even after the windows closed.

He could only hope for things to go back to normal, though he has no doubt that things *won't* go back to normal now that their secrecy was being threatened.

"Aww, did Ravenclaw leave already?" Hal turned to see Nepeta pouting as she strolled in, probably sneaked past Hal's protections. Again.

He really needed to upgrade the system again didn't he? Last time Nepeta had been kept out quite successfully because of his defences that he and Qrow put up to protect their home base, though time and time again they had to upgrade it or change in some way as Nepeta would go against it at least once or twice before slipping past the security, then again Nepeta was a genius in her own right even though she rarely showed it outside her Lioness persona.

She was a trained assassin, sneaking past security was part of her job and instinct as her kind stalked in the shadows for the right moment, passing through traps effortlessly before striking ferociously and most of the time, fatally. Still, she helped Hal in pointing out the slips and cracks in Hal's own security. In the physical world at least, digitally, he's second to none and no one could completely break through his firewalls.

"Yep, but not for long. He just needs to fly for a bit, bird instincts and all that, you get it." And she does, instincts were both a blessing and a curse for those animal-inclined creatures like herself. She was feline-inclined, obviously and had the feline instincts to go with them, she could mostly block them out during her human life, acting out childishly if she had let it built out.

On the job though, those instincts were a god-send, made hunting for her prey much easier and there was nothing childish during her job where her instincts instantly shift to something more... predatorily. Perfect for her non-human and dark life.

Meulin also had those instincts, though they were dulled and mostly kept away via their mother. The deadly instincts were buried, locked away unless something life-threatening happened; to keep it buried completely, that was just asking for one's instant demise.



Anyway, Nepeta took to visiting the Davis brothers whenever she could nowadays after her... blunder a few days ago. A blunder that the Davis duo thought with wary and confusion, Cans appearing out of nowhere, saying something suspiciously vague; that smelt of time travel to them. Or mostly to Qrow at least, who found time travel a, *difficult* subject to breach on.

The two talked but paused briefly as Hal's shades' *pinged* loudly with Hal heaving a heavy exasperated sigh.

Nepeta frowned, "Another pestering? Who's it from this time?"

Hal frowned before smiling, "Oh thank gog, it's just Callie." Lately Dirk and the others have been taken to pestering him for the last few days, after he had blocked Dirk Jane had come in his stead, then Jake, then Rose, then Roxy, both Jade and JOhn have yet to pester him but he knew it was only a matter of time.

Having Calliope pester him was a good change for a start.

"Oo~ What's Callie say? Also tell her I said hi!" Nepeta said with a grin, she had met, or well *talked* with Calliope via Hal after he told her about her. She was nice, her brother? Not so much as far as she has heard.

---

-- uranianUmbra [UU] is pestering roboticAutomaton --

UU: hello hal ouo

UU: pardon me if i'm interrUpting anything important bUt it's qUite a while hasn't it?

UU: apologies for that as well, things have been certainly... bUsy aroUnd here ;~u~

RA: Hey Callie, it's nice to hear from you again. Believe me it's a welcomed change compared to the rest of the people pestering me for the last couple of days.

RA: Also, busy you say?

UU: ?

UU: welcomed change?

UU: and as for the bUsy part, yes, very bUsy. apparently father is hosting an event soon. i don't exactly know what kind of event it is bUt it seems very important, like UsUal UnU.

RA: I see... Well good luck with that Callie. Anyway, yeah, a welcomed change.

RA: You know how I told you my bro resembles another dude who died years ago?

UU: yes i qUite recall that :u

UU: yoU said he resembled greatly to one deceased 'dave strider'? dirk's brother?

RA: Yup.

RA: And you know the Striders and their friends? Of course you do, well they finally met Qrow and now they think he's Dave back from the dead

UU: OnO

UU: oh my...

RA: Mhmm, now they won't stop pestering either me or my bro, who's going through a hard time right now so the timing is not good at all. They won't leave us alone.

UU: oh poor qrow UnU...

UU: i mUst say thoUgh, qrow mUst look incredibly like dave for this to happen yes>

UU: if yoU want, i can speak with roxy aboUt this and try to explain myself?

RA: Nah, bro and I can handle it. You don't have to interfere Callie.

RA: Oh yeah, Nep says hi by the way.

UU: oh alright...

UU: hello nepeta! ^u^

RA: She says and I directly quote along with the emoticons and everything.  
RA: ":33< hiya calliiee~!"

UU: 0u0

UU: anyway i

UU: oh blast it all

RA: Hmm? What's wrong Callie?

UU: i'm afraid this reUnion will have to rUn short, i am being called away  
>:u

UU: it was nice talking with yoU for a bit hal, i can only hope the next time  
we talk its for a little bit longer than right now. ta~! \*kisses\* ~3u <3

RA: Same, bye Calliope. Good luck with whatever's happening.

-- uranianUmbrage [UU] ceased pestering roboticAutomaton [RA] --

---

Calliope sighed as she reluctantly closed her laptop, grumbling within her mind as outwardly she took to an emotionless expression. She stashed her laptop, hiding it away from anyone who would try to find it; especially *him*.

"You were talking to *him* again, weren't you?! RA!"

*Speak of the devil and he will appear*, she thought bitterly to her self as she exited her room. She turned and nearly scowled like her brother who was scowling at her right now, though that wasn't a new agenda, scowls and sneers were almost always on Caliborn's face. He supposedly got that from their father, probably, they've never personally really seen him before so they could only take the word of their caretakers to heart.

"I do not see why that it would be your business Caliborn." She said coolly, walking past him and making him fume even more.

Calibron quickly caught up to her, "Tell me who he is, he keeps blocking me. *Me*, of all people!" He says angrily, though personally Calliope heard it

as a whine like always. "He should be grateful *I* actually lowered myself to talking to him, I'd think that I would have been the better option than talking to *you*." He continues and Calliope has to wonder if their father was really much of a spoiled brat when he was their age.

"Well you thought wrong then, he obviously finds me better company. And at any rate, I repeat, why would it be your business Caliborn? We've already agreed that the people we talk to are only our business... That is, until *you broke* that agreement." Calliope said with a downwards curl of her lips, typical of Caliborn, to break agreements and more.

Appallingly, Caliborn grinned toothily at her, "I did not break the agreement, *sis*. And it is well my business since I too have talked to RA, seriously what the fuck is this guy's name."

Calliope glared at her twin, "Oh you most certainly *did* break the agreement. We agreed that as long as we had our laptops our conversations with certain people we know about are left to ourselves. You broke that, or is your head so miniscule that you cannot comprehend that fact, *bro*?" A bit crueller than when she usually was but she was in a bad mood, she had wanted to talk with Hal a little longer, was it not their break time?

Caliborn sneered at her, fury in his eyes, "Oi! Shut your fucking mouth Calliope." He continued, ranting a bit with curses various in his speech but surprisingly enough, calmed down and gave her a nasty grin. "Anyway, back to shit; no, I did not break our agreement because as it was '*As long as we had our laptops our conversations with certain people* blah blah blah' was kept to ourselves right? Well, *you didn't have your laptop then did you?*" He cackled, and the green eyes twin slipped from her facade to growl at him.

"You and your silly fucking loopholes! That's not--"

"*Children*."

A voice cuts in, feminine but sharp as the twins were just one second away from a full on fist-fight instigated by either twin. Both tensed and looked at one of their care takers who was on their shift for them.

"I believe I did tell you it was time for lunch yes? Come now... **You mustn't dally.**"

"Yes, sir." Both Calliope and Caliborn grit out, postures straightening properly as they began to walk again. Both twins shared a glance, and in a rare sense of sibling understanding and mutual agreement, they stayed silent for the rest of the day. Not bothering with each other as they were sent back into the loop of their schedules.

'One day... we'll be free'

---

"What the *fuck*."

"Mew."

"No, *what* in the literal *fuck*."

"Hahahaha, your expression is quite amusing!"

"I don't, I, *Ro--mphh?!?*"

"Curious to see you well and whole, *Dave*, where is your other half?"

"*MMMPPHHMPHH!!!*"

"Whoops, silly me, my paws are covering your mouth, mew :3."

"*How in the fuck.*"

---

Hal stared as Qrow bristled beside him, a little not so subtly but he'd let it slide because he himself was not so subtly staring at the... being... in front of him.

"Umm, I don't understand. What are you two talking about, and what are you staring at?" Nepeta asked in wary confusion, taking to their side and

looking around in clear confusion.

Qrow turned to her in a flash, eyes wide in shock. "*You can't see her?!*" He asked loudly.

"Them. I am a them as I have decided recently, not her, nor him, just them." S-They chirped, waving a transparent pink paw hand at them.

Hal took a deep breath then turned to his brother, "*Alright... What the literal shit bro. Why is there a pink cat-ghost-hybrid-thing of Rose fucking Lalonde in our base.*"

"I don't know! Don't look at me, I have no fucking idea what's going on!"

True to Hal's words, a certain person-being floated atop their couch, flashing both lavender and pink as well as being quite transparent. Sh-They, had a striking resemblance of Rose Lalonde, who last time they checked, was alive and living quite well as a full human in the Lalonde household.

Also apparently only the two Davis' could see them.

"Okay you two, that sounds funny and all but I don't get the joke. What is going on?!" Nepeta demanded, pouting with hands on her hips.

"That is something I'd like to know as well." Hal deadpanned, scanning the impossibility before them.

Rose? Gave a hearty laugh, so unlike the Rose (and Rosaline) of this world.

"Oh this is fun, want me to give you guys a flashback? Sure! Also, tell me Dave, how did you manage to seperate from Nepeta? Also obtain a corporal body like that? Oh, tell me later, we have a flashback to get to! Meow, :3" Rose? Says quickly, plowing before anyone could say anything, except Nepeta who once again asked what and why the two Davis' were looking at above their couch.

"You see, while Dave was out flying, with very pretty looking wings I might add, I popped in!"

## Chapter End Notes

Let the chaos begin.

Jasprosesprite has entered the universe.

# Cat with a Hat

## Chapter Notes

With Jaspersprite in the world, how chaotic can it get?

Very. Very chaotic, it seems in the future.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

"Again."

***Thwack!***

"Again."

***Thwack!***

"Again!"

Calliope panted, muscles aching and groaning but she growls and *twists-  
Thwack! Riiip!*

She watched the bag's insides fall from the rip she accidentally caused, she gasped for air, lungs burning and body painfully numb as she struggles to *not* collapse to a heap on the floor. She'd get punished if she did at this age, when she was younger it was somewhat acceptable but now that she was older she was not allowed to fall in exhaustion in the presence of her care taker and instructors.

*"Good, you are improving much. You lack power, make it up with speed and precision."*

Calliope looked away, clutching at her bruised sides and arms.



At least it was bruises today and not cuts or lash wounds, bruises healed faster and were easier to take care of. Though she grimaces as she realizes her knuckles were bleeding, *oh for the love of*, that would make typing a bit of a pain but fine.

*"Our time's done. Till next time little heiress."*

Calliope watched her instructor saunter away, special dress glittering as always and cigarette lit in her cigarette holder. The green-eyed albino (*strange genetic mutation, very strange and unknown towards the outside world but actually quite common in her family blood*) winced as she took out the bandages out of her sylladex as well as a bottle of water.

It was an almost thankful thing that they had a truce during training time, her and her brother. Captchalouging items that would benefit the other for times like this, if they didn't, well, things would have been much harder for them if they didnt.

She notices a note in her sylladex, Caliborn wanted to converse.

I NEED TO ASK SOMETHING AS AWFuL AS IT IS FOR ME TO DO SO

Calliope huffs but answers anyway. She captchalouges it and sends it his way, its not long before she gets an answer.

what coUld yoU possibly ask at a time like this

THING IS, DID YOuR INSTRuCTOR SEEM SuSPICIOuSLY... EASY ON YOu TODAY? BECAuSE I THINK MINE DID

what do yoU mean

WHAT I MEAN IS THAT FuCKING LEPRECHAuN MAN HERE, THE TALL FuCKER WITH THE STuPID COINS 'QuARTERS', JuST LET ME OFF TODAY. uSuALLY HE DOESN'T FuCKING DO THAT REMEMBER? HE'S JuST AS BAD AS THAT BITCH SNOWMAN WHEN IT CAME TO TRAINING. WAIT A FuCKING MINuTE ISN'T

YOuR INSTRuCTOR THAT BITCH FOR TODAY? SEE THIS WAS WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOut, HOW THE FuCK ARE YOu RESPONDING IF SHE'S THERE, SHE LET YOu OFF EARLY DIDN'T SHE?

well perhaps she's jUst letting me have an easy day! qUarters for yoU as well.

DON'T FuCKING PRETEND TO BE THAT NAIVE AS YOu WANT TO BE SISTER, WE BOTH KNOW THAT IS NOT THE FuCKING CASE. SOMETHING IS uP.

alright fine. i did find it sUspicioUs that snowman was lenient today, what do yoU propose to be the problem?

I DON'T KNOW

what do yoU mean yoU don't know?? no bizarre theories, no assUmptions like UsUal? that's UsUally yoUr thing dearest brother when it came to things like this.

SHuT uP, I DON'T FuCKING KNOW THIS TIME ALRIGHT? MY THEORIES ARE uSuALLY CORRECT ANYWAY YOu SHOuLD BE AS FuCKING WARY AS ME BITCH, YOu ARE AREN'T YOu? GOOD. BuT AS I SAID, I GOT NOTHING THIS TIME AROuND AND THAT FuCKING MAKES ME NERVOU\$ AS FuCK.

alright, sUppose something is Up pray tell what yoU want ME to do aboUt it, or yoU, or the both of Us! we don't even know what is going on, and i know for a fact we can't confront oUr care takers on the matter mUch less oUr father.

I AM TIRED TO SAY I. DON'T. FuCKING. KNOW!! I JuST WANTED TO KNOW IF YOu FOuND IT SuSPICIOuS AS WELL AND MAYBE EVEN CONFIDE WITH YOu ON THE FuCKING MATTER. LOOK, I HATE THIS, YOu HATE THIS, WE BOTH HATE THIS, THEY KNOW OF OuR TRuCE IN DuRING TRAINING TIME AND PROBABLY A

LOT MORE BuT I DON'T THINK THEY KNOW ABOut "THAT" YET  
AND I WANT IT TO STAY THAT WAY, DON'T YOu?

of coUrse, bUt i say again, what do we do aboUt this? we can't hide it  
forever and whatever yoU 'sense' aboUt is going to happen eventUally, oUr  
best case scenario is admittedly better than the worst case scenario bUt we  
don't exactly want that now do we?

NO, OF FuCKING COuRSE NOT. BuT I SuGGEST KEEPING OuR  
EYES OPEN AND READY AT ALL TIMES, KNOWING THESE FuCKS  
THEY'D DO IT ANY FuCKING TIME.

agreed then

YOu DESTROY THIS SHIT, AS LOATHING FOR ME TO ADMIT BuT  
YOu ARE BETTER WHEN IT COMES TO THIS BuLLSHIT. AND I  
KNOW FOR FuCKING SuRE I'M STILL BEING MONITORED FROM  
THE LAST TIME I TRIED TO DO THAT SHIT.

yoU flatterer yoU ~u~

OH SHuT uP AND DESTROY THE FuCKING PAPER CALLIOPE tumut

Calliope smirks as she holds the paper between her fingers, she snaps her  
fingers and the paper ignites in a white flame. It burns quickly, though she  
doesn't like it when Caliborn calls your special white flame 'destruction',  
she liked to think it was a cool way for reconstruction. The paper burns and  
glows, shifting from its flat papery surface that was covered with writings  
to a small puff grey puff ball of cotton candy.

She had mastered this technique and used it as much as she could to fulfill  
her sugary addiction, much to the jealousy of her twin who could hardly  
make a spark and just turned his papers into ash. Calliope hummed in  
thought, before captchalouging it and sending it to her brother.

As much as they hated each other, they were all that they had in a physical  
sense, all their lives it was just them and though they had grew heavily apart  
from each other from their childhood, they still had moments of the remnant

sibling twin relationship they had when they were younger. Rare acts of kindness to each other, truces and looking out for each other; Calliope almost misses her full twin bond with Caliborn but alas, it was too late for them to salvage it, and even if they could... They couldn't do it while trapped in this hell they were in.

Maybe that was another hidden agenda to their escape, when they were finally free maybe...

Calliope shook her head, Caliborn was right as begrudgingly enough. She could pretend to be naive and gullible all she wanted, it couldn't change the fact *she wasn't* in reality.

The green eyed twin huffed and looked around before leaving the room, wincing as she remembered how sore she actually was.

Thank goodness that they were allowed to shower after training.

---

Qrow took a deep breath as he moved through the clouds, feeling free in the sky.

Flying eased his frazzled nerves, with him stubbornly staying inside even though it made him feel like a caged bird (shut up, he knows what he is but shut up) and not really helping his already tense and frazzled self. Admittedly he should have taken flight *days* ago, he felt the tension slip away and his problems temporarily forgotten as he focused on flying.

In fact, it didn't even feel weird when he finally let his wings out before taking flight; it was gratifying and he felt at peace.

Though he consciously made sure to stay within the area as he had promised Hal, as well making sure no one saw him there in the air which was easy because he and Hal had taken base to an abandoned place. Not a lot of people stayed in abandoned places and hikers or stragglers don't tend to look up during the day and the night was a safer bet to be flying out in the open but then again just as risky for many reasons.

Hal had taken care of the small rumors that had accumulated since they first appeared and since Qrow's first flight, which to his embarrassment wasn't as sneaky as he would have liked, but then again his wing was broken and he had the extra weight of Hal in his arms as he tried to escape from the damnable Midnight Crew.

He scowled at the memory of the crew before shaking his head, those days were done and over for both of them. They were with the Shackled Sufferers, a different and much kinder group that was just as brutal as the Crew was but without Spades' stupidity and cruelty.

The winged teen smiled in the air as he did multiple aerial loops that would probably earn him a scolding from Hal and maybe Kankri. At some point of his flight he even did a brief free fall, letting the air rush from below as he stared up at the sky through a red tinted vision via his goggles.

"Dave."

Qrow sputters in mid air, wings strewn about awkwardly before catching himself in the air; gliding to a stop and staying in place as he looked around.

"What?" He murmured, looking around warily, sure that he had heard right. A familiar voice calling out h-, *Dave's* name. Qrow frowns, looking around suspiciously before flying a bit higher and about to wave off the voice, he *had* been going stir crazy in the base--

"*Myehehehe~!*"

*Nope, what the fuck.*

Qrow thought soundly and may have said out loud as he turned around only to face a pink... person... *Rose???*

"Hello, *Daaave~!*"

There, floating in mid air, was one feline-ish Rose Lalonde? Flashing pink and lavender, tentacle whiskers on her cheeks, catty mouth and *princess hat*

on her head, she wore what Qrow recognized to be a Derse dreaming set of pajamas only modified as the symbol on her chest was a combination of a crescent moon and Rose's light aspect?

"What the *fuck*."

The Rose, who else could it be? But she was so, *different* and was she part sprite or something? She kept flashing between pink and lavender, did she somehow prototype herself with Jaspersprite? But she had legs! How in the-

"Mew." Was all she said, it was all she fucking said as she grinned unnervingly at Qrow.

"No, *what* in the literal *fuck*." Qrow corrected, feeling a bit light-headed and dizzy at the sight of the strange combination of his ecto-sister and her pet cat.

"Hahahaha, your expression is quite amusing!"

Her voice was also weird, all the vague and slightly monotone as well as the mysterious flair she usually puts in was gone. It was like that time he and Rose in the doomed timeline found his brother's drug stash that had crack in it! (It was a hard time for them alright? They got drunk, did drugs, it was entirely the fault of depression, stress, and the lack of adult supervision.) Not to mention her voice had a slight echo to it.

"I don't, I, *Ro--mphh?!?*" The ex-sprite suddenly found his mouth covered as Rose? Began to paw all over him, at his hair, his goggles, his wings, they flailed together in the air but somehow managed to stay in it as Rose? Was still grinning and touching him all curious-like.

"Curious to see you well and whole, *Dave*, where is your other half?"

Other half? What was she talking about, did she mean Hal?

"*MMMPPHHMPHH!!!*" '*Get your paws off me woman! Literally!*' Qrow thought angrily, tugging at the pink paw-hand covering his mouth and

Rose? Let out a high laugh, so unlike the Rose he had known (except the time they both were on crack but even then it wasn't this high.)

"Whoops, silly me, my paws are covering your mouth, mew :3."

She backs off but jitters around him, refusing to stay in one place and was content to circle around him in fast speeds.

*"How in the fuck."*

Rose? (He really needed to make sure and he was hesitant to call this version of his sister Rose) stopped and grinned at him widely, "I don't suppose you know a place where we can chat properly Dave?"

Okay, that was it, "My name's not Dave. It's Qrow." He told her with a tone of annoyance, he was sick of getting called Dave, he had another name dammit!

The cat-like teen looked at him with curious eyes, grin still there but not as wide. "Right, Qrow then? Still, I want a place to converse properly brother mine, tis bad etiquette to leave a dashing sprite as myself out in the open and I doubt you want to talk mid-flight." she purred, wiggling her eyebrows. Qrow made a face but conceded, she had a point, talking in mid-air was cool and all but not entirely uncomfortable for a good conversation.

"Fine, follow me, but you better explain *everything* got it?" Rose? giggled, grin growing wider.

"Mew, purr purr~" was all she replied, Qrow made another face before sighing and flapping his wings, motioning for her to follow.

---

TF: so uh

TF: im headin back now

RA: That was quick, I had thought you would take another half hour for flight.

RA: Actually it's not even half an hour.

RA: Qrow, what's going on

TF: leave it to you to know what's wrong, but um

TF: yeah i don't know how the fuck i can explain this

RA: Explain what

TF: just look will you

RA: ...

RA: Qrow, what the actual fuck is that.

TF: i don't know but we're heading back, we'll be there soon so

TF: prepare a warm welcome for our guest here i guess

RA: Just what the fuck is going on here

TF: don't ask me i don't know what the fuck is happening what the fuck was happening or what the fuck will be happening

RA: Right, I suppose I should break out the good milk and heat up the fried fish from yesterday.

RA: Oh wait, we're out of milk and fish again because guess who's here too?

TF: ah fuck

TF: gryffindors there ain't she

RA: Sneaked right past our security system again

RA: We'll need to update it.

RA: Again

TF: of course

RA: This is going to be interesting

TF: interesting my ass this is crazy shit



RA: Maybe

RA: I wonder what is going on with our luck here, it's one crazy thing after another.

TF: dont look at me i didn break no gogdamn mirror or anything

TF: no gogdamn bad luck bringing shit from this brother

TF: got anything to say hal

RA: Nonsense, I have done nothing of the sort.

---

Kankri huffed as he sat down, annoyance no longer hidden from his face as he finally, *finally* came to a secluded and quiet spot within the school.

It was deep within the library, in the very old and almost forgotten section way upstairs.

Skaian Academics was a huge school, and even bigger if you thought of putting together its various institutions of Skaian High, Skaian Grade school and etc. Chessboard College was the biggest school with an equally big campus, though that was mostly because it was combined with Skaian High so he saw his younger brother and his friends easily throughout the day if he wanted.

Skaian Grade School and Kindergarden was on another campus a few miles away, the headmaster of the school, a curious old man named Andrew Hussie, was certainly an odd man but he was brilliant just as he was odd and possibly insane.

Though, never judge a book by his cover; Headmaster Hussie knows all, most poeple would laugh at this whenever the old man said it but he truly did seem to know all. He, of all people, knew that Kankri was the Leader of the Shackled Sufferers.

And he did nothing about it but warn him not involve the school if he could!

*Kankri sipped his decaf coffee contently, greeting the Headmaster as he walked by his little spot underneath a certain tree. His coffee flying out of his grasp and pitifully landing on the grass, spilling its contents and instead providing the grass its tasteful chemicals instead of Kankri, who thankfully saved his notes from suffering a stained end.*

***Thwack!***

*Suddenly the old man thwacked his cane right at the top of his head! Scolding loudly on how reckless Kankri was with his agents within the vicinity of the school, he had found an agent of his 'coincidentally' one night during a midnight stroll through the woods 'carelessly' throwing away a barrel's worth of their target's blood into the soil on school grounds! 'Shame on you Mister Vantas! You should have trained them better than that!'*

*They were lucky no one was near them when Hussie began to lecture Kankri of all people on how he should train his agents, treat his subordinates and how to properly act like a leader.*

Kankri winced as he scratched at his head, remembering the phantom pain of Hussie's cane bonking his head throughout the lecture whenever he tried to interrupt or say something.

Anyway, he was in a spot that rarely anyone came to. Sequestered among old but nearly dustless books, the librarian and her assistants were determined people; cleaning every section of the library enough that dust hardly formed anywhere in any section of any shelf.

It was very peaceful, and one of the places Kankri enjoyed to use to temporarily isolate himself from the bright world of society. As used as he was to the whole societal act, even he needed breaks from time to time and gather his wits before facing the lunacy of the public while acting his own part of lunacy as the 'Insufferable lecturer'.

He doesn't exactly know how that started or where it came from but it amused him to no end for reasons obviously known.

Lately it has been harder and harder to keep himself from verbally and maybe even physically snapping at anyone like he usually does as Crimson, constantly reminding himself that he was Kankri Vantas, college freshman and insufferably caring big brother with an utter distaste for violence, racism, and a self-proclaiming social justice warrior.

While somewhat true, on many parts, he disliked racism, he did somewhat think himself as a social justice warrior, he didn't dislike violence as much as he said he did. If anything, during some days he *craved* violence, craved to feel the familiar recoil of his firearms, craved the feeling of life-threatening adrenaline and the *feeling* of Blood in the air...

Yeah, the others would certainly be surprised at how the 'pacifist' of the group had so much bloodlust and how he craved violence like he did.

He couldn't exactly help it, addiction as well as habit was a powerful thing after all.

Not to mention his family's connection to Blood, it was a curiously mysterious thing. The Archives don't say much, an old raid by an unknown force had copies and information either stolen or destroyed in the past and Kankri was even lucky to find out about his weird bloodline.

Though he's learned more with Dexter, he and his father did grow up and looked out for each other in the past so he's learned quite a bit about it but not all.

"Hiding yourself away Kanny?"

Kankri was jolted out of his thoughts and turned to see Porrim, inwardly he was cursing himself as he let his guard down *again*, it usually happened when he delved into thinking about his bloodline but thankfully it was only Porrim and no one else.

The red eyed teen sniffed, "I am not, as you say, 'hiding' Porrim. And, honestly, please cease calling me that! I am not a child anymore, I have requested you stop calling me that childish nickname many times, and I would appreciate my request be noted and abided! One of your many

campaigns repeat the motto 'No means no,' so why do you not abide by that?" He retorted, glaring slightly at the tattoo'd teen approaching him. Hoping his jab at her feminism would send her away, a tactic he used plenty a times though unfortunately it seems that Porrim was not having it today.

Porrim was an attractive teen, openly showing her womanly looks with pride and greatfully saying 'Fuck you' to any that said otherwise of her beautiful figure. It even came to her ignoring and retorting to strict old women who scolded her for being '*so unladylike*', she had enjoyment in doing things like that.

She was, unfortunately, taller than him (it seemed that genetic choosing has vexed him and left him shorter than half of his peers but no matter, he had the advantage with his height for more speedy maneuvers and movements because of it) and had grey curling tattoos on her body that were most visible around her arms and curling around her collarbone and neck. She had a lip piercing, and a few ear piercings as well. Her favorite jade make-up was on her face and it verily suited her.

Wore clothing that bordered the school's dresscode, enough to show her womanly figure as open as she could but still cut back to prevent in getting in official trouble other than disapproving looks, leers and more. Today it was slim fitting black jeans with dark green designs, one inch black heels and a flowy jade crop top that had her Virgo symbol stitched elegantly on the breast in a lovely fashion. Silver jewelry decorated her neck and wrists, no gems, just shiney forged metal and carved designs on the surface that went well with her piercings and silver-hoop earrings.

Her own designs of course, her family had a talent for fashion and dress-making, her own little sister and Karkat's close friend Kanaya already had a scholarship intended for her for her skills, and she had yet to even consider college; her mind preoccupied with teenage things like love and more, Kankri hears she has a crush on one Rose Lalonde and he had to bite his lip very hard to hide his amused smirk.

Though he openly laughed when Qrow informed him of how Rose and Kanaya were simply meant to be, when he and Nepeta placed bets on the two on various accounts for various things.

Porrim rolled her eyes, putting aside her bag and sat across from him, Kankri was glad that he had hesitated in pulling out some plans for the incoming meeting with the Mirthful Church, which was scheduled to happen in a few days in the future, after he had sat down and instead put down his homework for his classes.

"Look Kanny, you can't keep running away from Cronus every time you see him." She told him, Kankri didn't bother to hide the groan. Dammit, he regrets ever blurting out Cronus' name, he doesn't like the teen that way! He was content in being mostly acquaintances with him, curse Porrim and her insistence on Kankri's love life.

"PORRIM! How many times must I say this? I hold no qualms towards Cronus! There is nothing wrong between us, and in fact there is nothing between us at all, so please, for the thousandth time, drop it!" Sure he's taken to avoiding the violet-eyed teen but that was because of his own self-embarrassment rather than teenage hormone-ilked sulking, he was content as a single leader thank you very much!

Besides, Cronus was not his type; he liked individuals that can keep up with him combat, tactical and mind-wise, and preferably one who was not too shabby with a firearm. What can he say? Guns were his favorite weapon.

Porrim deadpanned at him, "Kanny you've been avoiding Cronus every time he tries to talk to you. I think you should give him a chance honestly, though yes I was mad too when he blatantly rejected you like that in front of the others but I heard he's recently had an epiphany." She said teasingly.

Kankri couldn't hold back his sneer and rolled eyes, deciding that his once, this *one time*, he would let himself slip and lift his filter from his mouth; *he just couldn't take this anymore!*

"Porrim I appreciate the effort in trying to provide me a love life but I am quite content as I am. To be entirely truthful I was not serious when I said that Cronus was my pining object of infatuation, I find him at best as a friend that is sometimes a pain at my side and at worst a lowly annoyance that I cannot get rid of. The only reason I had told you that was because of your persistence at my so called love life!" He snapped, standing up and

aiming half-lidded eyes of annoyance to the shocked Virgo before him, "And quite frankly whom I choose to pine for is none of your business, Cronus only left my lips that day of 'confession' was because his annoyance left a mark and his name was blurted by your stubborn prodding. Candidly enough, I now find Cronus as an acquaintance after *both* of our embarrassment during that pathetic gesture of '*rejection*'; and don't think I did not find out how you and he plotted for that or this Porrim, I may be insufferable but that does not mean I'm not observant!" He growled, captchalouging all his things.

He turned and barked at a shelf which had hidden one Cronus Ampora who now jolted out of place, stunned as Kankri stomped towards him, "Find someone else for your unruly affections and ridiculous play at my supposed innocent feelings because I am *not* having it! *Good day!*" The hidden leader snarled, storming off with a sense of satisfaction.

Alright, he probably over did it but he's been stressed these past days and Cronus and Porrim were not helping one bit. And if the thought of leaving both Porrim and Cronus in a stunned state filled him with immense satisfaction and amusement then what of it, he's been playing soft all this time, maybe he should be actively seeking the destruction of secrecy; it'd do wonders for him.

Maybe, that is. For now, he is content with the little burst of reality and will let the future take hold.

---

"And that's what happened~!" Chirped the floating mess of glittering pink and lavender. Paw-like hands nonchalantly cradling a glass of milk that had a certain other cat-like teen staring at.

Hal breathed in deeply, "Right, but that doesn't exactly tell us *how* the fuck you are here and *who* you are." He pointed out in a deadpanned, beside him Qrow nodded, eyeing the part-eldritch, part-cat and part-teen. Who decided they were non-binary but then again he didn't care, in fact, good for them. He guesses.

Nepeta twitched, "You guys are being serious that something is there. And by now, if it weren't for the floating glass, I would have seriously asked Xefros to check your mentality." She said, slitted pupils watching in her point of view as a glass of milk floated about, tilting back as the milk *disappeared into thin air*. It itched on her instincts and nerved, to lack the ability to see something that was there when others could, she didn't like it.

Qrow looked between them, confusion clear on his face, the blank facade gone in lieu of being in the presence of people he could relax around; and for some odd reason that he doesn't know about, this combination of his ecto-sibling and her elritch princess cat sprite was included in it. "You seriously cannot see them, at all?"

The Leo shook her head, tail flicking irritably as the last of the milk was drained from the cup but was refilled from the carton that suddenly floated in the air as well.

Jasprosesprite lapped at their glass of milk, "Hmm, true. I am Jasprosesprite^2, combination of Jaspersprite and Rosesprite, how you three cannot remember what happened I do not know nor do I know how Nepeta cannot seem to see or hear me." She hummed, before tilting her head, "Jasprosesprite^2 is a *meowthful*. Hehe, I think I shall follow both your leads, address me as Chesire from now on, it shall be my new name!" Ja-Chesire purred in triumph, toasting in victory.

Both brothers stared at them, "Comb, *combination of Jaspersprite and Rosesprite? When the fuck did that happen?!*" Qrow demanded, feeling uncomfortably numb once again.

Nepeta stayed silent, observing the whole thing and though she had a lot of questions she knows she would have to wait till the conversation was over to ask properly.

Chesire frowned, narrowing their eyes at them, looking at Qrow, Hal and Nepeta. They could sense both Hal and Qrow were still *somewhat* part sprite, Qrow's wings were a clear sign and Hal's appearance was another,

Nepeta however... it was faint, barely there, and they were worried, what had happened to Davepetasprite?

They opened their mouth, about to answer when suddenly their form flickered.

***Crash!***

Cheshire groaned uncomfortably as the glass of milk fell to the floor, shattering and spilling their milk '*What a waste of good milk.*' They thought to themselves faintly but that train of thought was abruptly stopped as their form continued to flicker, causing more discomfort to the sprite.

Qrow jolted up, "Oh shit! Ro, uh, Cheshire, what the fuck is happening?!" Nepeta perked up, alert, confused, and concerned as she hears the concern and panic in Qrow's voice, the glass shattering on the floor had caused her to tense.

Cheshire grunted, eyes closed in seeming concentration, the flickering ceased but soon enough their legs were becoming alarmingly transparent, disappearing slowly. "Wow that feels unpleasant." They groaned, looking down to their fading legs, "Oh for the love of! I guess this is farewell, if only temporarily, I can't seem to form my body like this away from a certain something or someones." They look up to see the concerned faces and they give them a cheeky smile, hiding the small strain.

"Don't look like that brother mine, or brothers, Hal you are a brother of course. I'll be fine, I will simply be down for the count for a little while. I cannot stay physically like this for long periods of times it seems, I need time to recharge, it's a recent developement, I've felt the drain ever since I slipped into this interesting little universe." Cheshire looks back down to their disappearing torso, legs gone, "Do not worry for little old me, I shall be back in time, or I will at least try to. This universe is quite interesting don't you agree?I have the right to explore a little bit, till we meet again at another time brothers! And it was nice seeing you again Nepeta, even you you cannot see or hear me, you look quite fetching as a semi-human did you know?" They chuckled, before waving and disappearing in a small flash of pink.



"Ta~!"

Silence reigned the room and both Qrow and Hal stared at the place where Chesire had disappeared from, Nepeta glancing at them and the spot before tentatively asking, "Are... Are they gone?"

Qrow twitched before storming into the kitchen, "I need a drink!" He briefly shouted, much to the surprise of the olive-eyed semi-human.

Hal sighs deeply, and tiredly, metal fingers massaging his forehead and he began to mutter underneath his breath, Nepeta looked at him in concern then at Qrow who came back with a bottle of hard vodka, a bucket of ice and a few shot glasses.

What just happened?

---

Chesire groaned as they reappeared in an empty alley, form flickering quickly. They look down to their paws and wince as they see their paws fading in and out. They close their eyes and take a deep breath, cat ears flicking and whiskey tentacles twitching as they did.

They open their eyes and disappear in a flash of lavender, before reappearing in another place. They look around warily, a twinge in their hearts as they floated in the air, 'Isn't this a sight for sore eyes.' They thought to themselves as they floated around the familiar room, floating fown from the air and dropping to sit on the side of the bed though careful not to jostle or wake a certain someone on the bed.

They looked on the bed, a bittersweet feeling in their chests as they stare at the person that slept in it. They stared into a familiar face, looking at the tired shut eyes of Rose Lalonde. Despite it being light out, she was asleep in her room. In their room.

Chesire hummed softly as they began to feel a little better, closing their eyes they floated off from the bed, feeling a tether taking place, linking them to the slumbering teen underneath them. 'Is this what happened Davepeta? Or rather, Qrow?' They thought to themselves, poking mentally

at the bond, only to jolt as they realized the poke somehow made Rose stir from her slumber.

Rose groaned softly as she shifted in her sheets, faintly she remembers entering her room tiredly, finally home with her mother, Roxy and Aunt Rosa. Sleep had avoided them all as they stayed at the Strider abode, they couldn't stay there forever and so they returned to their own home, and as soon as Rose entered her room she had crashed to sleep on her bed.

The lavender eyed teen sniffed and groggily began to open her eyes, wincing at the piercing light of... pink and lavender? She squinted before blinking her eyes awake, vision blurry and blinded a bit before the image of... her own glowing and flickering face before her.

"W-Wha?!" She gasped, sitting up, instinctively flinching and bracing herself for impact before blinking as she felt nothing. She panted slightly, tired mind stirring restlessly, "That was, I was sure that." She murmured before shaking her head, but the bizarre image of her own face, pink and lavender, cat-like features and tentacle whiskers... She must have been more tired than she truly thought.

Outside her room, hidden, one Chesire sighed in relief as Rose roused from her bed, tiredly leaving her room and entering her bathroom. That was close, as much as they wanted to go face to face with their counterpart, they aren't actually prepared for that. Still feeling a bit weak from the travel and the fact something in this universe was sapping their energy... But then it seemed staying close to Rose, and later on as she learned staying close to any or all of the Lalondes, was restoring that energy.

They huffed, looking around and closing their eyes, mind trying to think. An idea enters their head and they think about it contemplatively nodding their head, it could work, in fact...

They left in a flash of pink, in her Rose stopped as she sees a flash of pink briefly appear outside her window. She looks out and frowns when she finds nothing. She palms her face before sighing and turning away from the window, but making sure it was closed, locked and covered.

The future never looked so interesting.

## Chapter End Notes

DONE!

Just what is Chesire up to? And what *has* happened to Davepetasprite?  
So much things to do, know more next chapter!

I hope you enjoyed, till next chapter~!

# Eavesdropping and Feline Conditions

## Chapter Summary

John is mostly too curious for his own good, not to mention his bad habit of eavesdropping.

Meanwhile Chesire is in quite a situation, time to brush up their acting skills but it should be easy enough to act as a normal living being with no powers whatsoever, they just need to to buy their time and wait...

Only, wait for what?

The clock is ticking...

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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Days passed since meeting the bizarre phenomenon that was 'Jasprosprite^2', aka Chesire. Qrow almost thought it was nothing but a hallucination from cabin fever or something, or the product when he became shit-faced drunk; unfortunately he only became shit-faced drunk *after* the event.

The hangover he had next morning was probably not worth it but he didn't really care, Hal reassured him plenty that the whole situation had not been a hallucination and that he saw it too, recorded it even, though unfortunately when viewing the previous video about it all, Nepeta *still* couldn't really see Chesire, not until Hal put in a heat-seeking filter which oddly enough showed a strange temperature where Chesire would be though it wasn't shaped like Chesire, just a big cloud of where they had floated about and drank their milk.

The temperature was strange because it fluctuated, randomly changing at the drop of the hat during the whole conversation, one second the

temperature was cold as hell then hot as fuck, strangely enough they hadn't felt *anything* when nearby Chesire, nothing but the discomfort the eldritch-cat-teen sprite.

Something that actually seemed to bring amusement to Chesire as far as they knew in the small amount of time they had spent with them.

Anyway, a few days have passed and they had yet to come back, Qrow didn't even know if he wanted them to come back but then again Chesire was somewhat part Rose, the Rose *he* knew, not the Rose of this world. At any rate, Chesire was now a sibling, they changed their name, declared themselves as part of their family, well... Welcome to the messed up family Chesire Davis, whenever you get back, Qrow thought to himself as he sighed, leaning against a metal beam.

Currently he was out on a midnight flight, unable to sleep and was perched on one of the highest satellite towers within the city. The weather scheduled tonight called for few clouds and a biting cold wind that only comforted him as he stared up at the moon while listening to the faint sound of traffic and the city below.

RA: Ready to head home bro? Nep brought back Chinese. We're gonna start chowin' if ya don't head back soon.

Qrow breathed in a deep breath before exhaling, "Chinese you say? Don't you fucking dare open a box yet, I'm coming." He said before jumping off the tower, free-falling slightly before his wings extended and slow from a draft and he properly took flight, heading back.

RA: Whoops, too late, Nep's pretty much startin' on her sea food, gogdamn it's a salmon this time can you believe that?

"Dammit Gryffindor."

AC: :33 < you snooze you loose ravenclaw >:33c

"There better be some left for me or I swear."

RA: Don't worry I gotcha bro, reserved the onion one just for you.

"You little shit you know I don't like onions."

RA: Eat your vegetables bro or else you won't grow up big and strong.

---

John cringed and gave the unfortunate victim a sheepish smile, "Uuh, sorry man, I didn't expect it go so wrong." He said weakly, smile straining as he sees the broken arm.

Thankfully the other just laughed, "No worries Egbert, kind of my fault anyway, wasn't looking where I was going and actually you saved my hide. There was a test next period and I was totally going to fail, it was all in good fun though and I know you're a good kid so I know it wasn't on purpose." The older teen laughed which made John sigh in relief.

He *really* didn't expect it to go wrong, though unfortunately for the 'Master Prankster' of Skaian High some pranks *did* go wrong, and this was one of them; a banana peel and a jumpscare leading to a broken arm, and a bruised side for John, yeah he could have planned that out better...

At any rate, his dad must be driving through traffic by now, trying to get to him at Beforan Hospital after they most definitely called him.

Prospit Hospital was just within walking distance from Skaian Highschool building, and though they had their own infirmary they decided to let a professional Doctor take a look at the arm and John wanted to come with so he could apologize.

For the past few days he's been on a bit of a pranking spree, doing small pranks around the campus. It was also a few days since they had met Da... Qrow, who for some reason flipped out and tried speaking to him and Hal, Qrow's supposed younger brother.

It went...

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--ghostyTrickster [GT] began pestering turntimeFeathertail [TF] --

GT: um hi

GT: qrow right?

GT: hey um sorry for the whole thing before at the park...

--roboticAutomaton [RA] began pestering ghostyTricker [GT]--

RA: Sorry dude but bro's not going to be on Pesterchum for a while leave message after the beep.

RA: Beep.

GT: wait what

GT: how did you

RA: Motherfucking beep man, message recieved. Farewell.

--roboticAutomaton [RA] ceased pestering ghostyTrickster [GT] --

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...Yeah...

It ended as well as it started.

No one else had much luck either, that Hal guy was adamant in keeping them from trying to talk with Qrow for whatever reason. He means sure, they kind of got off the wrong foot at the start...

"Mr. Egbert, you are free to go, though you might want to stay within the hospital, your father is on his way."

John snapped out his thoughts and nodded eagerly, "O-oh, right!"

With a final apology he exited the the room and out into the halls.

The hospital wasn't very busy right now, a few nurses and doctors here and there, patients being lead to their rooms or to another room, people walking around and stuff.

His dad was on his way but who knows when he'd get here, so John wandered around, making sure to note where he was and remember his way back.

"Egbert?"

John jumped and whirled around with wide eyes, he blinked. "Karkat?"

Karkat Vantas frowned at him, narrowing his red eyes. Karkat was a good friend of his despite what he may say otherwise, he met him a few years ago and he was in many of his classes.

"The fuck are you doing here?"

John grinned sheepishly, "I-uh, it was a prank gone wrong hahaha..." He coughed and cleared his throat, "What about you? What are you doing here?" He asked with a smile, hoping to change the subject of his embarrassing failure of a hilarious joke.

Karkat's face darkened and he sulked and immediately John regretted asking, "It's... today's the day my parents, you know." He grunted out, shifting uncomfortably, gripping his elbows and hugging himself.

John's smile fell and he shared a sad frown with Karkat, "Oh..." Yeah, definitely regretting to ask now. "So... they're here too huh?" He asked softly, following Karkat as they walked through the halls.

Karkat grimaced and nodded, "It's only Kankri and me today, Meulin stopped coming for years and Nepeta excused herself for today, Kankri though, he's... he's talking to them again." He sighed, deep and heavy and just conveyed how tired and sad he was.

"He still thinks Mom and Dad'll wake up after all these years," His face scrunches in anger, exhaustion and unsaid sadness, "I doubt it of fucking course, I mean, even after what like eight years of being unresponsive?" He suddenly scoffs, "There was a bullshit thing that happened a few years ago of them being responsive and awake but in actuality there wasn't, they stayed as they are."



John gave him a sympathetic look.

His parents, his, Nepeta's, Meulin's and Kankri's, were stuck in a deep coma. One that the doctors doubt they could wake up from. Eight years ago they were involved in some kind of freak accident that had them near-dead, they managed to come out alive but fell into the coma.

They were on life-support, though it was gossiped that Meulin, who was technically the oldest of the family, was planning on taking them off of it and finally end it all but it was unsure and probably not true. Even though she stopped visiting them with the others after a couple of years, she still obviously cares for them so she wouldn't do that, would she?

Anyway, Kankri was the one who visited them the most, Karkat said he'd come to the hospital and run his mouth off to their comatose figures till visiting hours were over or Karkat forcibly dragged him home.

John's brain niggled as he thought of what Karkat said, "Hey Karkat, how long ago did that happen?" He asked curiously, he didn't know why but something inside him had him asking it.

Karkat scowled, "I don't fucking know why you're asking but I think it was four years ago. A frantic doctor was calling us and shit, telling us that Dad was awake, Kankri came here first since he was the closest but when we came here we found out that the doctor made a mistake and that nothing had changed, couldn't really asked Kankri since he went quiet after that for a few days. Worried the fuck out of us but I guess the false-hope of them waking got him quiet." He sighed, remembering back then with a thin grim line, how Kankri had stayed mute for the next few days with black bags underneath his eyes and just generally in a daze.

John twitched, "Oh..."

They continued the walk in silence, both unwilling to speak as they wandered the hall and Karkat's path led them to the room that held his comatose parents where his big brother was.

Silently they got to the door and Karkat cracked the door open slightly, peeking through and sighed internally when he saw Kankri standing over their Dad, holding his hand and talking as always. John sneaked a peek as well, looking over Karkat's head since he was, unfortunately for Karkat, taller than the red-eyed teen.

"... and I suppose Nepeta's doing fine as well. You'd be proud of her dad, she grew up strong, she's advanced through her training and is one of the best. I'm sure she'd give even *Mom* a hard time." Kankri said in a quiet voice that both still heard with strained hearing. Karkat rose a brow, training? What training? Did he mean Nepeta's exercising habits? She did like to keep shape and exercised daily, she had a lean figure but could throw a grown man over her shoulder with little effort.

"Karkat still doesn't know, nor Meulin, unfortunately I see that soon enough they will find out. It's inevitable, though I would prefer they would never find out, you'd scold me for the thought I know but, I feel that they don't deserve to know the things we know, I'd rather they stay as they are and be ignorant to it all."

Karkat narrowed his eyes, what? What did he mean, was there something he was *keeping* from them? In secret?

Just before he opened his mouth to demand more he felt a hand clamp down on his mouth, he looked to John only to be taken back by the serious look the usually goofy teen boy had on his face, and it must be the trick of the light Karkat thought as he thinks he sees John's eyes *glow*.

In another place, the blue symbol on a certain box glowed softly, surprising a certain woman who looked over it.

John didn't know what took hold of him when he covered Karkat's mouth shut, something inside him screaming '*Shush, listen, listen, quiet, hear, hear him*' but he followed his instincts, which didn't usually prove him wrong for a long time.

"I'd say that things are becoming more interesting Dad, more energetic and probably more complicated in a few years. The brothers have been found

out, the Felt are for some reason quiet and there's rumors of Lord English being on the move. The Crew are quiet as well but only for so long now that they have information, they'll be acting soon enough."

Both teens shared a look, a wide-eyed surprised look. They knew about the Felt, who didn't? They were one of the most publicly known violent mafia groups out there, and 'The Crew', did he mean the *Midnight Crew*? The Felt's number one rival group? Who in *the hell was Lord English*? It couldn't be Jake and his family, they weren't Lords, and there were other English families in the city; they had a classmate with the last name English who was nowhere near related to Jake. And what about the 'brothers' who've been 'found out'.

This, this was *something*. Just *what the hell Kankri*, Karkat thought to himself as he willingly stayed quiet even after he pried John's hand off his mouth, wanting to hear more.

"I wonder how you'd handle things dad, you came before me after all and have more experience for something like this. Even though Dexter reassures me that I was better than you at this age I seriously doubt that, he's been having a blast though, ever since Qrow and Hal entered our lives things have been interesting. Those two are quite the something, I'm sure you'd agree."

John bit back a gasp while Karkat was just growing more and more confused by the minute.

"Something tells me that those two will be the death of me though, them and Nepeta, they're hand fulls I swear." Kankri sighs, a flicker of fondness recognizable though it was long-suffering sigh. "I wonder where Karkat is, he went to the bathroom a few minutes ago and we're suppose to head home soon." He mused offhandedly, truly not realizing nor sensing the fact his brother and John were right outside the door.

Karkat was a hard person to pinpoint even with his senses, especially with the fact thei father sealed away his powers before they were attacked and sent into a seemingly permanent coma. It hid him from others like him and

kept him safe but it made it extremely hard to locate Karkat based on the Blood powers they had now even though he was family.

Karkat jerked back, forcibly taking John with him as he quietly shut the door and quickly left the door to a safer place to converse.

Kankri blinked at the sound of footsteps, he looked at the door only to shrug as he sees a group of nurses hurrying off past it. He wonders where Karkat is and gives him 5 more minutes before going off to search for him and continues to talk to his comatose father. Soon. They would wake up, he knew it, he could *feel* it.

---

*Kelvin jerked up with a gasp, panting heavily scrambling off the bed while his eyes and hands pulsed painfully along with his chest.*

*'Kan...kri...' he thought faintly, he cursed as he hears the door open and someone dropping something to the floor.*

*'Leonor ' His mind thought forcefully, the **Powers** prompting him to go to his still unconscious wife's side.*

*"Leonor..." He said softly in a pained tone, he held her hand and closed his eyes just as Leonor's eyes opened and a pink glow escaped her.*

*'help ~~what are you doing~~'*

*'Nepeta' both parents thought as they felt something, something calling help, something that felt oh so like their beloved daughter.*

*'help me save dave ~~no NEPETA STOP~~ save him save ~~NEPETA NO~~ him steal him ~~NEPETA DONT DO THIS~~ away save him keep him ~~NEPETA PLEASE~~ safe'*

*They didn't know who Dave was but their daughter, or at least someone who sounded so much like their daughter, was begging for help somewhere and they could feel her terror, her desperate chanting and they reached out...*

*When the nurse came back with a frantic doctor, they found Kelvin back on his bed, Leonor as well, the only proof of their movement was Leonor's stretched hand and the fact Kelvin's blanket was on the ground.*

*' NEPETA ~~bye dave... it was...fun... being us ...B..H~~'*

---

Cheshire groaned as they awoke on the hard ground, a puddle of dried blood underneath them but they were spotless and blood-free. Moving groggily they slowly got their mind and body sorted out.

*'...Did it work?'* They thought to themselves as they shakily stood up, nearly falling over before managing to stand up right, they blinked before tilting their head confusedly, *'Wait, did what work?'*

Gingerly they walked forward, stumbling before blinking and freezing as they took in their reflection from a piece of a broken mirror in the trash.

*'Is that... me?'* Cheshire thought frozen as they stared at their pink and lavender eyes.

A furry little face stared back at them, black and blonde fur patches covering their entire now completely feline body. Their body had somehow become a complete cat, they had black fur with random blonde patches and a blonde underbelly and heterochromic eyes with their right eye being pink and their left being lavender

*"What happened to me?"* They asked only to jerk at the weird scratchy and different pitched voice, it was as if two voices were speaking at once, Rose's old normal voice and the voice of Jasper when he had become Jaspersprite. Suddenly they groaned, feeling their sides ache as if something wanting to come out, they could only give a painful mewl as something protruded from their side.

They looked at the mirror when the pain receded and were shocked to find pinkish tentacles, ones that Jaspersprite used to have as arms, flailing around. Warily they observed their additional appendages besides their flickering black and yellow tail.

Later they shivered as the tentacles disappeared back into their side as they looked around, mind muddled and confused.

*'I need to find Qrow, I don't remember much but I remember meeting Qrow and Hal.'* they thought before sprinting away from the alley they were in, only to halt when they felt something in their chest.

They tilted their head in confusion only to jump when they heard a squeal.

"Kitty! Aww, look at you~" They turned and their eyes widened at the sight as two teens loomed over her.

*'Roxy? Rose?'* They thought before they were abruptly lifted into the arms of the smiling and excited Roxy.

"What an interesting combination of eyes." Rose murmured, looking into their eyes.

"Think Mom and Aunt Rosy will let us keep him?"

*'Crap.'*

---

Roxanne narrowed her eyes at the box, just a few minutes ago the bright blue symbol had glowed right out of nowhere, it was all too sudden.

She had been looking over some files when the box, the infuriatingly mysterious and impenetrably impossible box that was really getting on her nerves, glowed, the bright blue symbol glowing softly, and the screen on the box had flickered, a clock, a *literal clock* appeared on the screen but it had no hands and the numbers on the clock's face were glitching out and changing before it faded back to complete darkness.

"Just what in the hell are you?" She murmured as she looked over the box again, eyes critically looking at all the symbols for a sign they were doing *something* like the bright blue symbol. However, just as before it happened, the box did nothing.

She sighed, "Well, at least you did *something*, it was small but it was *something*." She made a note to inform the others as she looked back to her files, putting the strange chest back where it was.

The box did nothing but elsewhere a clock's broken rhythm speeds up and both Calliope and Caliborn shivered once more, before turning to each other wondering what the hell happened.

---

John panted lightly as they hid in the hall, he looked at Karkat with wide eyes and blurted out, "Your brother knows Qrow and Hal?" He said incredulously.

Karkat glared at him as he took in a deep breath, "And who the *fuck* is Qrow and Hal?"

John bit his lip and looked back to where the room where Kankri was in, before his mind clicked in a random fact.

"Wait a minute you said something happened four years ago with Mr. and Ms. Vantas-Leijon?"

"Yeah? What of it?!"

"I..."

## Chapter End Notes

Things have gotten quite interesting and soon enough another encounter is slated for Qrow and the others, but this time both Karkat and John are suspicious about Kankri.

Just what is in that fucking box?

Oh well, I hope you enjoyed, till next chapter! :]

# To Joke Around

## Chapter Summary

The time is coming closer, Shackled Sufferers will soon meet with the Mirthful Church.

Meanwhile, Karkat is dragged into the fray as he and the others try to figure things out.

## Chapter Notes

Chapter 14, things are going to a direction I've been planning from the beginning. Like, you have *no* idea how long I've wanted to write these plans down for the story. Though looking at things, I see I have to adjust a few stuff and maybe change a few things but whatever! I got this.

Anyway, sorry for the late update but the last story had me kicking in frustration because of Writer's Block but I managed! Hopefully it'll be smooth sailings from here on out.

P.S. Chatlogs galore this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

--ghostyTrickster [GT] is now online--

GT: guys, some recent and important information has been discovered and i think we found some kind of lead for grow and hal

TG: say wut

GG: wait really :o

--timaeusTestified [TT] is now online--



TT: What information.

GT: hold on he's coming online in a bit

--tentacleTherapist [TT] is now online--

--gutsyGumshoe [GG] is now online--

--golgathasTerror [GT] is now online--

TT: Who's coming online?

--carcinoGeneticist [CG] entered group chat Davis Investigation Squad--

GG: karkat????

TG: karkles wtf u doin here man

TT: Vantas?

TT: Vantas.

GT: Well hello there!

CG: EGBERT WHAT THE EVERLOVING SHIT IS THIS

CG: OH WAIT NEVERMIND

GT: guys, karkat's gonna help us in finding out what's going on with qrow

GG: and how exactly is karkat going to do that???

GG: Yes, that is something I want to know as well.

CG: JOHN FILLED ME IN ON WHAT'S GOING ON AND  
CONSIDERING WHAT I'VE RECENTLY LEARNED, HOW THE  
\*\*FUCK\*\* AM I SUPPOSE TO SIT DOWN AS MY OWN BIG  
BROTHER IS INVOLVED WITH WHATEVER THE SHIT THIS IS.

TT: Wait, what do you exactly mean 'your own big brother' is involved.

TT: You mean Kankri Vantas?

TG: tf does mister sjw even have 2 \*do\* with what the hells been goin on karkles

CG: HOW THE FUCK AM I SUPPOSE TO KNOW? I ONLY FOUND OUT RECENTLY

GT: yeah!

GT: karkat and i recently learned that kankri actually \*\*knows\*\* grow and his 'little brother' hal!

TT: Tell me everything.

---

--shackledCrimson [SC] is now online--  
--automaticRecreator [AR] is now online--  
--aviatingWingspan [AW] is now online--  
--psionSteersman [PS] is now online--  
--fluidEscapist [FE] is now online--  
--leadLioness [LL] is now online--  
--stagPioneer [SP] is now online--  
--slothVocalist [SV] is now online--

SC: Alright, the Mirthful Church's event is coming close. Avian are you prepared to face their Bard?

PS: thIIIs IIs goIIIng 2 bee good, II can tell hehehe.

LL: He's ready!

AW: pretty much i guess

SP: 'You guess'

SP: You do know that if you lose this challenge it'll look back on our group?

SP: Loosing is not an option angel boy

AR: Angel boy

AR: Are they still on that theory where bro bro here is an angel sent from

the heavens?

FE: YEP XD

AW: ugh

PS: Its the most famous theory out there, Its still circulating hotly In the rumor mill

AW: dont worry about it deer man i got this

SP: You better, that stunt with the Crew, as amusing as it was, reflected on our group. You're lucky that Slick isn't really popular, had you done it to another member or another person that had a good reputation...

SV: tetrarch please calm down, avian and lioness did Xtremely well last challenge

SP: That was because it was a tag team event against the Church's **\*\*PRINCE\*\***, he had help from Lioness.

LL: And what's wrong with my help?

SP: Nothing, however this time he *\*won't\** have your help and he's against the Prince's younger brother who although is younger and less experienced do keep in mind that he was recently appointed as their Bard for more than the reason of family business.

SC: Calm yourself Tetrarch, I have faith that Avian will not let us down.

SC: On other matters, how goes the plans?

FE: goin as well as youd think bossman

PS: sal, got any new info from miss lalonde

FE: nothing surprising, shes trying to look in with our brothers here, she and the kiddos

SP: So what are we going to do about that? They've already been exposed.

SC: Their existence have only been revealed, they haven't been totally exposed.

SC: Not yet anyway.

AW: that is not in anyway inauspicious or inconspicuous

AR: Well he has a point, we weren't going to stay 'non-existent' forever.

AR: Though I would have liked it if we were more in control of our existence.

SC: Unfortunately it doesn't seem so, at any rate it's too late to stop things now.

SC: Certain things have been set into motion and to stop it now, it would lead things worse than what's up ahead.

SP: Blood powers?

FE: YEP

PS: blood powers

AR: A very valid answer.

AW: the most valid answer

LL: Bona fide validity.

SV: you know, for the most part one look at this chat it wouldn't really X the mind that this was a place for most professional business that involves espionage and assassinations

SP: I blame the nonsense that the rest brings with them into this chat, it used to be so much more serious.

FE: and BOORIING

FE: besides bossman can always tell us to knock it off if he wants the 'nonsense' to stop, he's done it before

SC: I have, and though it is a serious matter it's not that particularly serious. As long as Avian knows and is prepared for the fight then by all means, continue your 'nonsense'.

AW: like i said, i got this

AW: despite what you think

AW: i havent been sitting around on my ass for the past week

AW: the brat and leo wouldnt let me

LL: Nope! >:3

AR: Love you too bro.

PS: so avIIans ready, everythIIings ready, we all ready?

FE: PRETTY MUCH

SC: Good, though I would like everyone to regularly check in until the challenge.

SC: Make sure everything is going smoothly and no one is going to provoke the Mirthful Church, \*again\*. Unlike last time, I doubt that Highblood will let this time slide.

AW: what the hell happened to that guy anyway

LL: He's still in punishment for nearly breaking the treaty and insulting the Church, he's lucky to be alive.

PS: IIdIIot had IIt comIIIng

SV: that and times X

SP: Wasn't he the guy that...

SV: \*\*\*that and times X\*\*\*

FE: you know you're a bad person when the most moral of the group absolutely hates your guts XD

SC: Indeed.

---

*Dave took a deep breath, trying to calm his nerves. "So..." He started, looking uncomfortable as he sat down, "You're... me?"*

*"Kind of, but not really." The other, trapped person admitted, curiously poking around. "A part of me is you, and the other is an alien girl from another dimension. Efurrrything was, is, and probably will be complicated."*

*"Oh... That's neat I guess."*

*"But hey, that's life and paradox space." They shrugged, settling down in front of them, observing the way their hand was flickering even more than normal.*

*Dave sighed, frowning as he tried to bury his face into his knees. His shades, gone, along with the rest of his sanity it seemed as he stared at a different and older version of himself that was... fused with something-one? else.*

*Why did he think this was a good idea in the first place.*

*He looked back up and stared desperately at them, "Can't you, I don't know... Do something to get us out of here?" He asked. He wanted to go home, this, this was too much.*

*They frowned before shaking their head, "Sorry junior, nothin's coming up furr me. Don't worry though, I purromise I'll get you back to your... brothers." They trailed off, an uncomfortable look on their face now.*

*Dave peered at them curiously, "If you're really me, does that mean you have your own brothers? Or is this some kind of parallel universe thing where in one universe I'm an only child and in here I'm the youngest cub of the pack?"*

*It was to hard to really know what they thought of his question, what with the flickering shades and all but Dave could see the furrowed brow and*

*could spy a slight unsure twitch of their mouth. Before they could say anything however, suddenly the room's lights flickered, and Dave could feel the tremor in the ground.*

*"What the hell?!"*

*Davepeta blinked underneath their shades and grinned widely, "Come on kid! Cavalry's comin'!" They laughed, claws emerging from their fingerless gloves. Dave scrambled to their side, just as the wall behind him exploded. Davepeta's wings flapped once and the dust was blown away.*

*"Davepeta!"*

*Davepeta laughed in triumph and slight relief, "ARquius!" Dave looked incredulous as a red, ghost, alien? thing with... His bro's glasses? The pointy anime ones that Dirk and Bro prefer to, they were on 'ARquius' face!*

*Outside on the other side of the one-way mirror, a manipulator tsk'ed, "Now now... This just won't do~"*

*It fell apart even more from there.*

---

Qrow shifted and shivered, a chill unnaturally going down his spine and causing his feathers to fluff, much to his and Hal's irritation. "The hell man? I just smoothed those down." Hal deadpanned, literally just finished their regularly scheduled preening.

The winged-Davis grunted, cheeks tinting in embarrassment, "How the hell am I suppose to know? And don't sass me young man, I will take your arm again." Qrow hissed with narrowed eyes when Hal opened his mouth to retort. Hal huffed but raised *both* his arms in surrender. The probation was done and now Hal two functioning arms instead of one, which was a relief though Hal made a lot of notes and reminders to upgrade his current arm since it wasn't up to speed as his other one. It was a good start though.

Hal sighed before shaking his head and starting to comb his robotic fingers through his brother's feathers, *again*. Gently pulling at loose feathers and

smoothing down the fluffed up parts of his wings, Qrow sighed in contentment on instinct, internally cursing the pleasure he got from this and once again cursing the side-effects of being part bird.

Hal leniently used one hand to continue preening his brother's wings and use the other to observe one of his brother's feathers.

Qrow's wings were quite bizarre, and according to Kankri and the others one-of-a-kind. No other in the world had bird wings for some odd bizarre reason, and it was food for thought sometimes.

"Hey bro, mind if I use the leftover fluff you shed for, I don't know yet but like hopy shit we got piles and *piles* of your feathers in one of my sylladex cards." Hal commented, captchalouging the feather. He had started to collect Qrow's feathers ever since he took in the reins on preening duty, Qrow could hardly preen himself without his sprite tail anymore.

Qrow huffed, "Whatever, do what you want." He muttered sleepily, the second preening session was soothing and was quietly lulling him to sleep.

Hal smirked as he sees Qrow slowly dozing off, eventually falling completely asleep by the time Hal finished preening his wings a second time. The half-human-andriod hummed as he collected the rest of the feathers that fell off, trying to think of a useful way to use the feather's he'd collected over time.

He mused creating a little toy for Nepeta, to tease her with with her feline instincts. Then he thought of maybe alchemizing it, combining it with something else to create a new and possibly useful thing. Qrow's wings weren't normal, not with their unusual ability to fuse into Qrow's skin and turn into tattoos, or how sometimes they would glow like they were sprite wings, not to mention how unusual it was that Qrow could fly considering his wingspan and weight. And how Qrow could make sharp turns or do stunts that would be *impossible* since Qrow had *crow wings*, and those wings weren't exactly built for the sharp turns Qrow regularly liked to make on regular flights or missions.



All in all, Qrow's wings were versatile and impressive, almost impossible considering their original nature, the size of the wingspan but somehow Qrow made it work and used them to his absolute best of abilities.

Hal blinked, someone was pestering him.

---

--tentacleTherapist [TT] is pestering roboticAutomaton [RA]--

TT: Greetings.

RA: Hm? And what's this supposed to be now?

TT: A friendly chat if you so wish, I only want to talk.

RA: Normally I'd say no and block your ass but since you were one of the ones that actually stopped contacting me when I said to, I'll give you one chance.

RA: And only one chance, after that you will be blocked for a long time along with the others.

TT: Acceptable terms.

RA: So, what is it you want to 'talk' about?

TT: I would like talk about Qrow, now before you go on and block me from continuing would you at least hear me out? I swear I, on the behalf of my friends and I, am being absolute sincere.

RA: ...

RA: Alright, since you actually got me in a good mood I'll let you talk.

TT: Thank you.

TT: First and foremost, I and the others would like to apologize for our behavior during our meeting with Qrow at the park.

TT: I had realized too late that perhaps running and screaming at your brother was not the way to go.

RA: No shit.

RA: It freaked him out to the point he didn't want to go outside for a while.

TT: I see.

TT: That is. We're sorry, it wasn't in our agenda to cause him distress.

RA: Maybe, but it still did.

RA: Especially the big dude, the one in the dumb anime shades and cap. He really freaked my bro out, grappling him like a fucking sumo wrestler.

RA: Dereck Strider.

TT: Ah yes, the elder Strider.

TT: We didn't exactly expect him to grab unto Qrow like that, though it was admittedly our fault for calling him in.

TT: A spur of the moment, we truly believed that Qrow was... an old acquaintance of ours.

RA: I know.

RA: And he's not by the way.

TT: Right.

TT: At any rate we wish to make it up for Qrow and to talk with him in a calm and orderly manner.

TT: No chasing, no screaming and definitely no accusations and claims of him being our dead acquaintance.

RA: That is in no way suspicious at all.

TT: It's not.

TT: I promise you.

RA: Hmm...

RA: I'll think about it.

TT: Please do

RA: But don't expect an answer in a week or so.

RA: We're going to be busy for a while.

TT: Busy doing what if I may ask?

RA: No, you may not ask.

RA: Anyway, is that all?

TT: I suppose for now it is.

RA: Goodbye Rose.

--roboticAutomaton [RA] stopped pestering tentacleTherapist [TT]--

---

"Rose, what the hell?"

Rose looked up towards the others as they gathered around her and her laptop. "What? You wanted me to talk to him and I did." Was all she said as she stood up, closing closing Pesterchum and her laptop to set it on the table.

Dirk pursed his lips, "I didn't exactly expect for you to say what you said." He retorted, a little bit angry. Ever since his first talk with 'Hal', he hasn't seen the guy in a very good light. Not to mention him claiming Qrow was *his* brother, that Qrow *wasn't* Dave but... Dirk *knew* he was Dave, he could feel it.

He just didn't know how to justify his feelings.

Rose gave him a look, "If we keep doing what we were doing we would only drive *Qrow* away. And I imagine that is the last thing you want to happen." She pointed out, crossing her arms firmly, glancing around the room. They all looked cowed, reluctant but they knew she had a point.

Chasing after Qrow would only drive him away, just like the two attempts before, three if you counted James' attempt to chase after him.

"Then what do we do?" Jade questioned quietly, looking between Rose and Dirk.

Roxy spoke in from where she sat, originally besides her cousin with a peculiar cat in her lap, "Didn't you see in the chat?" She inquired, gaining their attention as she petted at their new feline, "Rosie's got a plan." She informed them with a smile.

"And um, what exactly is that plan?" Jake asked as he sat beside her, Jane sitting on Roxy's other side.

Rose frowned as she looked at the cat before shaking her head and turning to Dirk, "I've given us a small chance to become close to Qrow." She began, uncrossing her arms, "Should Hal accept then the chance grows slightly bigger. We'll *talk* with him, like normal people. Find out what we can without pushing too much while simultaneously keeping an eye on Qrow as well as *not* drive him away." She gave Dirk a firm stare, the orange-eyed boy grunted and looked away but gave a reluctant nod.

Why did Lalonde's have to be so right?!

John huffed but blinked as his attention is caught by a certain cat that was still enjoying the petting Roxy was giving it, "Hey Rox," He started, "When did you get a cat?" He questioned, looking curiously at the feline that turned to look at him, he blinked as he was taken back by the two different colored cat eyes that peered at him.

Roxy grinned, "Like her? She's our new cat! Kind of, I still need to ask Mom and Aunt Rosa about her but I have a good feeling that they'll let us keep her!" She cheered.

Jane tilted her head, "Those are interesting eyes." She noted faintly, seeing the pink and purple irises and the pointed pupil that were typical for a cat, those eyes turned to her and she felt slightly dazed as she looked into them.

"I know right? She's really pretty."

Dirk sighed, "Cat aside, actually, that reminds me. John," He called out, the buck-toothed blue-eyed boy jolted, "Where's Karkat?"

"Where *is* Karkles."

John snickered at the nickname before answering, "He couldn't really come today, though he *is* keeping a closer eye on Kankri today as much as he can." John admitted.

Ever since they found out that somehow *Kankri*, of all people was somehow involved with the Davis brothers... well they didn't really know how to feel about it. And though the Strilonde family suspected Nepeta knew more than she said, they couldn't really push her and both Rose and Dirk knew they couldn't really push Kankri to reveal what he knew.

At any point, they were now relying mostly on Karkat to keep an eye on Kankri and tell them what he found out.

Which was harder than they knew Karkat would growl at them when they tried to grill him information about it all.

This was *Kankri*, the Vantas *older brother* who was a notorious Social Justice Warrior, a die-hard pacifist and infamous for his long on-the-spot speeches and basically driving others away with his drawling tone and feared long-winded lectures. Which... at hindsight, gave him plenty of free time to do whatever he did in his own free time Dirk realized as he deeply thought about it.

Who knows what he was doing whenever he was on his own.

Meanwhile, Chesire was having a lifetime listening in on the conversation. Purring contently on the lap of Roxy, '*That's it, pay no attention to the pink and purple-eyed cat*' Chesire thought to themselves as they enjoyed the petting they got from Roxy and now Jane.

They were very interested in what was going on, after being shortly captured by Roxy they realized that they had an advantage, somewhat. They could gather information then relay it to Qrow and Hal, and they suppose Kankri as well if their theory of their brothers working with the human version of Karkat's dancestor (*who they briefly met from time to time during their bubble shenanigans on the meteor*).

Now they only needed to find a way to contact Qrow and Hal without suspicion.

---

Qrow huffed as he adjusted his red goggles, tugging at his scarf while looking over his sylladex.

"You ready bro?" Hal questioned, rolling into the room.

Qrow glanced at him and smirked, "We're doing this."

Hal grinned, "We're making this happen." He continued, going to his brother's side and bumping his brother's clenched fist in a fist bump.

Nepeta rolled her eyes from her place at the doorway, "If you guys are done being dorks, let's get this show on the road please. Salamancer's here!" She announced with a fanged smirk.

It was time to go to Church.

#### Chapter End Notes

Things are about to get bloody!

Next chapter, a closer look at the Mirthful Church and exclusive parts on the Makara part of the story. A lot of things are going to pick up as we enter the Clown Arc of the story ;]

Hehehehe.... You guys are in for a ride soon, hopefully, I'm relying on my own writing here.

Anyway, hope you enjoy!

Till next chapter!

# Take me to Church (1)

## Chapter Summary

The Mirthful Church is a cruel and powerful group, Kankri is thankful that they're allies instead of enemies.

Meanwhile, Gamzee and Kurloz appear!

## Chapter Notes

It's here! Chapter 15 everyone; Mirthful Church time! And you know what else it's time for...

MAKARA CAMEOS~~ Incoming! Kurloz, Gamzee and Kieran! Aka, human-ish GHB.

Sorry for the long wait, a bad case of writer's block is on me :(, also for the first time ever I'm helping out on a fic. It's an Eddsworld fic and, it's an interesting experience, I've never tried it before but I'm doing my best.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

Kurloz Makara was a good boyfriend.

He wasn't the best as his beloved Meulin or his best friend Mituna might say, but he was good enough. The best boyfriend probably wouldn't be part of some underground criminal organization and enjoy it, the best boyfriend wouldn't agree to something as in battle the little sister of his girlfriend and her friend...

He remembers the surprise in finding out Nepeta, Meulin's little sister, being part of the Shackled Sufferers, he still has no idea why she's part of them but she seemed to be adamant in keeping Meulin out of the underground which was just fine for him since he also didn't want Meulin to

be a part of or find out the darkest side of him. Besides, Nepeta and her friend, Avian, they fought admirably against him.

*He stared in surprise as the mask is tugged down, Nepeta, **Nepeta Leijon**, stared back at him coldly. "Kurloz." She greeted emotionlessly, firmly, no childishness in sight. Her pupils are slitted, showing her bloodlines as a tail curled slowly behind her warily. Before he could speak, she took the reign, "We don't tell Meulin this, we just get this over with and go home like nothing happened." Normally he would have been pissed at the order from someone else so underneath him but this was Nepeta, Meulin's little sister.*

*His father looked amused, far too amused. "I think it's time for you to get ready son, you have a fight to be part of." He rasped, and Kurloz could only look at him incredulously, how did his father expect him to fight her of all people?!*

*Suddenly he dodges, moving instantaneously as a knife embeds itself at the head of his chair. Around him, the Subjugglators hiss but do nothing as his father raises his hand, looking even more amused if possible. He snaps to look at Nepeta, she looks angry, tail lashing furiously, "Don't underestimate me just because I'm your girlfriend's little sister Makara!" She spat, a predatory look in her eyes that just riles him up on instinct, "I am the Huntress! The Leading Lioness of the Sufferers and you **will** respect our strength!" She declared, looking determined and staring him straight in the eye.*

*Besides her, Avian, who had yet to reveal his face, flared his wings, bird wings, threateningly as if to back up her claim. The Sufferers on the other side of the room cheer, and the Second Crimson, face hidden as well and obscured by the darkness and shadows but bloody red eyes burned within the darkness. Psiioniic by his side, smiling widely, all teeth as eyes flashed blue, red and purple. Tetrarch on his other side, amber eyes looking on coldly and finally Salamencer, they providing the unnatural shadow that would obscure Second Crimson in mystery.*

*From behind, he hears his father's laugh. Boisterous and deep, rasping, "We will see Little Lioness! Get the arena ready!" The Grand Highblood commanded and both Sufferers and Subjugglators cheered, demanding to*



*see blood, to see combat, to see action that would signify and establish respect from both sides of the gangs.*

When the fight happened, he had been hesitant in the beginning but when it showed that Nepeta was showing no hesitance in *her* fight, and the fact she had backup that had the same mindset, he finally took it seriously; which resulted one of the most invigorating fights he's had that didn't involve his father in combat.

The tag team of Huntress and Avian were one of the more deadly combinations he's seen, they both worked well together as if they had fought together their whole lives, easily weaving their attacks together to create a creatively deadly dance that was difficult to move to at first. They had made worthy adversaries, though at the end he had been curious how they would fair individually, unfortunately that would have to wait till the next time they would have a Mirthful Meeting, where ties were renewed via combat.

It was time for the Sufferers to renew allegiance by sending one of their own into combat, should they win then they would continue to be allies, if they loose than they loose allegiance and the Mirthful Church falls into neutrality or possible hostility should one of the Sufferers act out and The Grand Highblood calls for their blood.

This time though, unlike last time, there would only be one combatant. The only reason why there had been two last time was because Kurloz had elected himself and he was very strong, only half as strong as his father but powerful in his own right. The Sufferers had risked sending in Nepeta against him alone, especially with the fact she was young than him and somewhat new to her position, The Grand Highblood had been in a good mood and let them choose a second combatant which turned out to be Avian; who was in fact going to be the combatant at the upcoming meeting now.

His father had deemed Gamzee, his own second son and his little brother, to be ready to partake in the Church's on goings. Before, Gamzee had only been restricted to observing whatever important was going on in the Church, just as Kurloz had been raised until he was ready, of course he was

trained to fight at the side but he didn't participate in anything serious. Gamzee had watched the last battle, and he was very curious about the identity of the elusive Avian that only appeared so many months before and had been rising through the ranks of the underground for his skill and his most unique physical trait, his bird wings, the only wing type they've seen that was not insect-like.

Tradition in the Mirthful Meeting's combat activity, both combatants must reveal their identities before each other before fighting. Those that are part of the identity revelations are promised to keep the identity of the combatants a secret via a blood oath, **blood oaths** are very serious and are near impossible to break. Those that leak the identity are immediately subjected to punishment via the blood-oath going as far as to kill someone.

At any rate, since originally it was Kurloz versus Nepeta, or rather, The Prince of the Church vs Huntress Lioness of the Sufferers, only Nepeta and Kurloz revealed their identities while Avian got to keep his a secret. Though now that Gamzee was going to challenge Avian, his identity would be revealed and they'd see who was the bird boy underneath the goggles and scarf.

There was speculation and for some reason the Sufferers referred to him as an actual to god 'Angel', they didn't really know why but they could only currently guess it was because of Avian's wings.

"Kurloz." His head snaps to see his father, tall, proud and strong, at the door. He's a hulking figure at 6'10, with just as much muscle to fill in with the unnatural height. Face painted black and white messily, mostly on purpose since it gives him a feared look along with the upper black mask with pointed curvy horns and glowing purple eyes, he grinned sharply at him. "Ready my prince?" He rasped, eyelids half-lidded but the glowing orbs underneath were sparkling with excitement and glee.

From behind, he can see Gamzee smiling eagerly, smiling ear-to-ear. He looked well-prepared, face painted intricately with special face paint that would last the whole night, his hair was wild, unkempt. He wore a half-mask, bright violet with a black eye with a painted dark red frown that contradicted his wide almost-feral smile. At his side were his trusty colorful

clown clubs, one red and the other yellow, they were Gamzee's main weapon and they were very dangerous in his hands. He had lasted very long against their own father in combat with those equipped as his weapons, lasting longer than Kurloz! Which was very much something, Kurloz felt proud of his little brother.

Kurloz nodded, putting on his stitched half-mask, the area around his eyes were painted of course but he opted to have a mask over his mouth instead of paint to display stitches, he would have gone with actual stitches but opted not to after some definitive thought.

Kurloz Makara was a good boyfriend, but he wasn't the best.

---

*Dave panted as leaned against the wall, trembling with exhaustion and terror. He bit his lip as two others settled on the other wall, a familiar red ghost-like figure helped an also familiar orange ghost-like one.*

*"I-I..." He was speechless, what transpired earlier he... The red-eyed teen looked towards...*

*"Hang in there bro, I got'cha..." The Dirk-look-alike said softly at his own look-alike, the orange, ghost, bird, Dave that was trembling for an entirely other reason. "Shh, c'mon, calm down bro, I'm here."*

*"N-Nepeta, she..." Davesprite rasped, hyperventilating as orange glowing tears began to run down his face, "She, she saved us. She's dead." He clutched at Dir-Halsprite.*

*Halsprite looked pained, "I know, I know, Equius did the same... But we have to move, Equius' powers are fading and we can't hide here forever." He whispered back with a grim face. Halsprite looked at Dave, "Come on kid, we have to go." Dave didn't protest, but he sent alternate him a concerned look as Halsprite wrapped an arm and supported Davesprite who coughed.*

*Suddenly the alarm of the lab blared and red lights flared on and off, Halsprite cursed, "Come on!" He urged as they ran down the hall, trying to*

*look for a way out.*

---

Qrow paid no mind to the red lights that flared as he and the others walked steadily towards their destination.

He fell behind and besides Casey who was behind Kankri, dressed in his full Crimson regalia. A dark red leather trench coat, black full fingered gloves, a thick black undershirt that secretly had a bulletproof shirt underneath it, black biker pants and calf high leather black boots with red designs. A bright red belt stood out the dark colors, though on the back of his trench coat was the Shackled Sufferer's symbol.

Besides him was Dexter, Psiioniic. He wore a purple visor with a red and blue half-mask covering the rest of his face. From the visor were two yellow antennas that were easy conduits and conductors for his powers, he wore a black and yellow jacket with a black undershirt, he had black leather pants and mustard yellow boots. Thick yellow gloves with red and blue circuit-like designs covered his hands that stopped at his elbow, from occasion his antennas sparked as he smirked underneath his mask.

On Kankri's other side was Dammek, Tetrarch. He wore a brown upper mask that enveloped his eyes and nose, it seemed like there was no way he should be able to see or smell but he could because it acted somewhat like a one-way mirror. He wore a brown leather biker jacket, thin black and brown gloves. It was safe to say that everyone in their group wore gloves or had some sort of hand-cover, they weren't stupid after all. Smooth matte black pants were Dammek's first choice, a lot of black in the group, and with the pants he wore thick but silent military-esque boots.

Behind Kankri was Casey, Salamancer. They wore a full smooth black cloak with lavender lining and seams, it flowed in time with their steps, underneath the cloak she wore mostly murky yellow clothing, almost mustard with hints of orange. The cloak was especially made for her, a fashion statement as well as a main form of protection, it was tough and very hard to tear, tatter or destroy. Their bright hair was obscured by the hood that shrouded them in darkness, a perk of the cloak and their own personal powers, their upper face was unrecognizable and covered

completely in shadow. They provided Crimson most of his mystery, shrouding him in shadows and darkness in 'public' meetings, especially on confrontations.

Qrow was on Salamancer's left, and Nepeta, now Huntress LL, or rather the Huntress, was on Casey's right. Xefros was at the way back of the group, making sure no one strayed from the path or did anything funny. He was the most lenient of them all and was more inclined to give warnings, but make no mistake, lenient as he was, he could be just as harsh and cut-throat as Kankri when he needed to be.

AR: You ready for this bro.

AW: yes

AR: You sure. You know what you're going to have to do before the fight

AR: You'll have to reveal your face and all the serious jazz.

AW: i know but im ready

AR: ...

AR: Qrow, good luck. Not that you need it.

AW: thanks brat now enjoy the show

AR: Roger that.

They both knew he wasn't really ready, but he kept a stoic face and trudged through. He was... a Davis. And he was going to win this, or at least make it a firm tie.

---

--carcinoGeneticist [CG] is now online--

CG: KANKRI'S GONE

--timaeusTestified [TT] is now online--

--tipsyGnostalgic [TG] is now online--

TT: What.

TG: well whered he go???

CG: I DON'T KNOW.

CG: I WAS UP TO GET A GLASS OF WATER BUT THEN I NOTICED THAT KANKRI WAS MISSING. LIKE, IT WAS WAY TO QUIET EVEN FOR HIM WHEN HE'S ASLEEP. I GOT THIS KIND OF WEIRD FEELING? IT FELT LIKE I WAS THE ONLY ONE IN THE HOUSE...

TG: n how do u kno that?

CG: I PICKED HIS LOCK, HE WASN'T IN HIS ROOM.

TG: lol wut karkles

TG: u \*\*picked\*\* his lock????/?? XD

CG: I LEARNED IT FROM LATULA SHUT UP.

CG: ANYWAY, I PICKED HIS LOCK AND GOT INSIDE HIS BEDROOM. HE WASN'T THERE, I CHECKED EVERYWHERE IN THE HOUSE, HE WASN'T THERE. I THOUGHT HE WAS ASLEEP BUT THERE WAS A DECOY IN THE BED, HELL THERE WAS A RECORDER THERE THAT PLAYED LIKE SOFT BREATHING?? LIKE SOMEONE FAKE SLEEPING, I WAS ALMOST CONVINCED BUT HE ALWAYS WAKES UP WHENEVER I'M IN HIS ROOM, EVEN WHEN EXHAUSTED.

TT: Any ideas on where he went?

CG: NO.

--ghostyTrickster [GT] is now online--

GT: guys it's the middle of the night why are you all pinging in pesterchum

GT: oh... nevermind

TG: sorry johnny did we wake u?

GT: kind of? i was in and out of it tonight but i heard the pings

TT: You could have muted us John.

GT: i was curious dirk, now whats this about karkats big brother missing?

CG: HE'S NOT AT HOME, THE WINDOWS ARE LOCKED, THE DOORS TOO, I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE FUCK HE'S GONE.

TT: Shit.

TG: now what do we do? we dont know where tf karkles big bro is

GT: can you try and track him? like all hacker spy stuff?

TG: nup

TG: unless big bro karkles got somethin i can track i cant find him

TT: Tracking someone is harder than the movies show John.

CG: HIS COMPUTER, HIS PHONE, HE DIDN'T TAKE ANYTHING OF SIGNIFICANCE OR ANYTHING THAT CAN TRACK HIM. HELL HIS WATCH IS HERE!

TG: sorry johnny bby but no super haxxor spy stuff happenin here :(((

GT: :(

--gardenGnostic [GG] is now online--

GG: it is the middle of the night...

GG: EVERYONE GO THE FUCK TO SLEEP, WE'LL TALK MORE IN THE MORNING!!!!

TG: eep

--tipsyGnostalgic [TG] is now offline--

TT: Whoops.

--timeausTestified [TT] is now offline--

CG: HOLY FUCK

--carcinoGeneticist [CG] is now offline--

GT: oh, um, goodnight jade sorry!!

--ghostyTrickster [GT] is not offline--

--garden Gnostic [GG] has temporarily closed group chat Davis Investigation Squad--

--gardenGnostic [GG] is now offline--

---

Gamzee was excited. Brimming with energy and feeling the need for a good fight.

Currently they were underneath one of the buildings that was owned by the Mirthful Church but declared as neutral ground. It was best used for the traditional fights of the Church and was used for meetings. The cover story for the building was a work out gym, two floors above but three floors below.

Ever since the fight between his big brother, Nepeta -*Nepeta* the sweet cat-loving girl who acted like she could do no harm- and curious bird-boy teen called Avian. He'd been wanting to go at Avian, thinking it had been a little unfair at the start that it was two against one. But then he'd remember that they were against *Kurloz*, his big brother.

Avian had gotten his attention by fighting with a *broken sword*, a broken, half-sword, and yet he fought... wonderfully, like a pro somehow. It wasn't only his wings, it was the way he fought, like he'd been trained since he'd been able to stand, and his *wings*. He'd never seen bird wings before, and he's never seen anyone fight with wings like Avian did.

The Summoner, he fought with a lance. His insect wings weren't as flexible or useful as avian wings, or Avian's wings. Avian used the weight of his wings, sometimes using them as a shield or an extra limb to bat attacks away as he backed up or charged, using them for leverage, to hover and glide, attacks from the sky.



It was amazing to watch.

And that was with Nepeta as his teammate. Together, they worked extremely well. Avian gave Nepeta all the support she needed, defending her from Kurloz's attacks as she retaliated. But even then, they barely managed to win since Kurloz was much stronger and much more experienced than Nepeta and Avian.

Now Gamzee was going to go head-to-head against Avian, one on one. He was excited!

Even more, he would unveil Avian's mystery identity. Maybe they would finally find out why the Sufferer's tend to whisper 'Angel' whenever Avian was involved? Like, seriously? It couldn't be his personality or seemingly lack of, he always kept quiet, never speaking a word and just relied on Nepeta or Huntress to say the words and if he was alone he just stayed silent regardless.

Gamzee stood besides his father's left side practically bouncing on one foot to another, Kurloz was on his right. Kieran was settled on on the large throne-like chair on one side of the large room, the Church's side. Around them, the chosen subjuglators who were trusted enough for the identity revelation were gathered, chattering and whooping impatiently. There were two visible doors, the main entrance and exit to the room that connected to a large tunnel that led to the rooms above them, and the other door led to the fighting floor, the arena that would hold their glorious fight.

"Calm yourself son, your opponent is coming." Kieran murmured down to him with amusement, chuckling when Gamzee only nodded absentmindedly. Suddenly the lights flared red, signalling the close approach of the Shackled Sufferers group.

The main door opened, large twin doors that opened automatically.

In came the Shackled Sufferers, more composed and organized, lead by the Second Crimson who was flanked by the Psiioniic and the Tetrarch, shadowed by Salamancer who had the Huntress and the Angel by their side.

Behind them, the chosen Sufferers that would witness the identity revelation.

Their subjugglators quietened as Kieran sat up with a smirk as Second Crimson stood across them on the other side of the room, he didn't sit down, he never did at the start. He stood, figure obscured by the Salamancer's powers. While Gamzee and Kurloz were completely in the dark of the other's identity, Kieran already knew who it was, who else would take charge of the group aside from Kelvin's offspring?

The thought of the man sent conflicted feelings to him, he respected the man since they had gone against each other in the very same tradition that was going on right now. Many a times, and many a times Kelvin managed to either win or force a truce. He also loathed the man for falling, for turning into a comatose patient. Or rather, he was angry at the fact that *he himself*, had not been the one to send him there in the first place.

"*Highblood*." Second Crimson greeted, that was all he was going to be to the older male, a Second Crimson. His voice was, of course, disguised by unknown means, whether by his own power or by some kind of machine.

The Grand Highblood sent him a sharp yet lazy smirk, "**Second Crimson.**" He greeted back, using his own power to deepen his voice way deeper than his already deep and husky voice, it added in a subtle growl as well. Neat wasn't it? And very intimidating.

His subjugglators murmured, excited whispers and mumbles as Gamzee's gaze solely focused on Avian who only shifted silently, face unreadable underneath the goggles and scarf. His posture seemingly relaxed but Kieran could tell he was as energetic as Gamzee, the subtle shifting of his feet, the small twitches of his gloves fingers.

His first son Kurloz focuses on the Huntress girl, the second youngest of the original Crimson and Huntress, though the first Huntress often went by 'Disciple' so the girl could be called Huntress in his mind. He chuckled lowly, such interest in the younger sister of his beloved little girlfriend.

If only Kurloz had taken the younger as his romantic partner, she was much stronger than her older sister but oh well, Kurloz was still young and young little Huntress *did* need to grow a bit more.

The large man stood, easily dwarfing everyone in the room even without the elevated stage he stood on. "**Warriors, march forward.**" He commanded. Like the red sea, both the subjuglators and the sufferers parted as both Gamzee -the Bard of the Mirthful Church- and Avian -the Angel of the Shackled Sufferers- stepped forward.

Both marched towards the very center of the room and stopped just meters away from each other. Second Crimson spoke next, "*Do the Mirthful Church swear a **blood oath** to keep the identities of both warriors classified and undisclosed?*" His eyes glowed a brighter candy red, oh so similar looking to the original Crimson himself.

"**We swear on the oath,**" Kieran rumbled, "**And does the Shackled Sufferers swear on a blood oath to keep the identities of both warriors secret and confidential?**"

"*We swear on the oath.*"

Both leaders took out a knife, their people following suit, taking out pointy or sharp objects that would be able to draw blood. Kieran and Kankri sliced open their palms, both of their bloods glowing brightly as the others followed, their own blood glowing as well.

"***The oath has been pledged, blood has been spilled. So be it.***" There was a bright red flash, and everyone in the room could feel the oath settling in, their intentional wounds healing instantly.

"*Reveal yourselves.*"

Gamzee took off his mask, brushing his hair back for a clear look at his painted but still recognizable face. "Gamzee Makara." He purred, grinning ferally as he looked at Avian intently.

Avian didn't hesitate, he tugged down his scarf and took off his thick red goggles.

The Makaras instantly recognized him, both Gamzee and Kurloz nearly gaping in shock as they see his face, the subjugglators and sufferers murmured, whispered, gossiped to each other. Skin pale, eyes red and hair pale blond. Kieran let out a harsh cackle, while Kankri's fists clenched.

*Dave Strider* stared at them defiantly with a cold look. Wings flaring.

"Qrow Davis."

Both Makara boys blinked at the name, wait what?

Kieran let out an even harsher cackle.

**"FIGHTER'S GET READY!"** He roared with an animalistic grin.

---

*Kieran looked down to the pale boy, broken, bleeding and dead beyond belief.*

*"Please do take care of him Kieran, do this and your debt shall be fulfilled."*

*The Grand Highblood eyed the white-haired man warily, "And of the other boy?" He gestured to the other, oh so strange was the other, bleeding dead but somehow somewhat alive despite being only a torso with one arm. The weakling groaned, trying so hard to reach the dead one, who he recognized as Dave Strider with dead orange eyes instead of red. Another look to the one-armed boy, he saw Dirk Strider but with red eyes instead of orange.*

*Interesting.*

*"Leave him to me... Now go. Lord English sends his thanks."*

*He huffed, "Very well. This shall be the last time the Church will do something for you for free. Like you said, my debt shall be fulfilled with this act alone." He grabbed the dead orange-eyed Dave and dragged him away,*

*red-eyed Dirk cried out, reaching uselessly for him as he was dragged away as well.*

*Not a day later, the Striders find one dead Dave whose eyes somehow turned red. Dirk Strider is alive and orange-eyed. Kieran pays him no mind other than a short curious glance, he has no business to think on what happened.*

*All he cares is that his debt has been fulfilled and the Church no longer owes to the ilk of Lord English.*

#### Chapter End Notes

AAAAAAAAAAAAAnd DOnE.

Phew! Sorry again for the late chapter. ANyway!

Next chapter:

Qrow's in for a beating but will he win? How will the others react when Qrow shows up again but clearly injured? So much things to do~

# Take me to Church (2)

## Chapter Summary

The Bard of the Church vs The Angel of the Sufferers.

## Chapter Notes

Part 2 incoming, make way! I think this is going to be around four parts. Soo, this might be mostly filler but it's still interesting.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

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Cosima Pyrope pinched the bridge of her nose and withheld a sigh. Tired eyes behind red tinted shades opening to read the latest report on her desk.

Another day, another failed attempt on apprehending the ever elusive criminal groups of the city. They haven't arrested any criminal with solid and known involvement with *any* of the large crime syndicates the past week. Which was *frustrating*, she *knew* there was criminal activity happening, *big* criminal activity. Particularly between a certain two groups, but this time, it wasn't the usual groups that would come to mind.

In the city, there were six major crime organizations. Well, 'major' was stretching it a bit, the two most known were, of course, **The Midnight Crew** and *The Felt*.

Known best by their hated rivalry against each other, they were infamous for their territory wars that would result in shoot-outs and plenty of vandalism and property damage.

The other four, well, major as they were they didn't like getting involved with The Crew and The Felt. Rarely going between them but supporting them from time to time depending on whatever reason or deal they made.

**The Mirthful Church**, a borderline cult criminal syndicate that had clowns and juggalos as their theme. They were fairly the biggest and bloodiest group among the six, they were known for their ruthlessness and brute strength. Cosima had arrested a few 'subjugglators' as they call themselves, and all of those arrests needed reinforced cuffs and a lot of, a *lot* of anesthesia.

*The Web Gamblers*, now this group was tricky, and arachnids were their theme. The head was cunning, extremely so and always seemed to have a back-up plan and managed to get away at the last minute. They weren't as big as The Church, or The Crew but they were the slippery type of people that liked to manipulate people and make deals that if not made properly, could end really bad for the one being dealt. Now Cosima suspected the syndicate's leader but had no veritable proof on the matter, and as much as she clashed with Moira, she was still kind of her friend- that didn't mean that she wouldn't arrest her the moment actual proof came to light.

**The Lost Dreamers**, this group was somewhat confusing and bovines were their theme. Two groups were somewhat like vigilantes, The Dreamers were one of them. Out of all six of them, they were probably the most moral and somewhat law-abiding criminal group ever. They didn't deal normal activities, preferring to just as hired bodyguards and tried not kill often, weirdly enough they usually teamed up with The Dreamers.

And finally, the most mysterious and unknown of the six...

*The Shackled Sufferers*, their group, they were known assassins and hitpeople, their theme- Cosima couldn't figure it out, it was a jagged symbol that she didn't know of. But it was a recognized one, surprisingly enough as well, they were also somewhat like vigilantes, only darker since they didn't care for their kills as long as their mission was completed and kept to themselves. Out of the six, they were the smallest in numbers but great in skills. And another surprise, they seemed allied with The Church. Sometimes, but they've been known to work together sometimes.

And the most *frustrating* group to catch, in all her years on the force, she has yet to completely catch *and* interrogate a *single* member. She's tried, *by god she's tried*. But whenever she's caught a member they always seemed to

break out by either the end of the day or the week! And a week was the *longest* time period they've been able to hold a damned Shackled.

Just when you think you have them, they break away.

So. God. Damn. *Frustrating*.

The police officer slapped the report back on her desk, a frustrated groan escaping her lips. Oh what she wouldn't do to know what the hell was going on- the groups were *silent*, no activity anywhere in the city. That was always suspicious, *especially* with the fact the Crew had been so loud before for some reason, something about someone taunting Spades Slick? But now, for some reason they were quiet, and their rival counterpart was just as quiet which was *unnerving*.

And then there was the Church, the Church being *silent* was downright ***disturbing***. Unfortunately this was not really uncommon, there were times that they were all silent, but she never knew *why- why were they so quiet why was there NOTHING-* it was practically eating away her mental sanity!

"Inspector Pyrope!" She straightened, fixing her glasses and stood up abruptly.

"Yes sir?" Cosima asked as the Commissioner, what was he doing here, stood before her.

Commissioner Kalbur, head of the police department, looked at her with aloof eyes from behind his glasses, "Still no sign of syndicate activity?"

She shook her head, "No sir, no matter where we look, no matter who we ask- it's been quiet."

The Commissioner sighed, "Too quiet." He agreed, looking just as frustrated as she was. He'd been after the groups for as long as she was, if not a bit longer. "Keep looking, silent times are too dangerous and unpredictable. It was fine when they were loud and screaming but silence is



never a good thing." He told her, she nodded in understanding. "Anything new on Spades Slick?"

"Nothing much sir, something's ticked him off or so they say but we can never get the whole story- just something about the Shackled member Avian pulling a stunt that pissed the Crew member off."

Avian.

As far as they knew it, Avian and another person nicknamed Aviator were the newest members of the Shackled Sufferers- new as they were, they were skilled since Avian came out of nowhere and was already partnering with a known and experienced Shackled, the Huntress. But like everything else, they knew next to nothing about the criminal.

The criminal underground was both loose and tight lipped, they couldn't be sure which information proved true or false, over all it was extremely difficult going after each one of the groups much less all six of them.

But as silent as it was, Cosima knew, she just *knew* something was up.

She just didn't know what.

---

Kankri-no, *Crimson*, watched with a calculative eye as the arena lit up.

Another hidden section of the building used purely for combat, despite its rare use, the arena was clean and unnaturally pristine. It looked like a mini-gladiator arena from Greek times, only difference was the giant steel net cage that went all the way to the very high ceiling. Avian had the advantage of his wings but he knew it wouldn't be enough, not with the Bard being an unpredictable progeny of the Highblood himself.

Plus it would go against the rules to keep out of the Bard's reach for too long, it was complicated but at the same time simple, they were fair though *Crimson* had to give them that.

The Bard was Gamzee Makara, it was to be expected really, it wasn't as much as a surprised as it was for the subjugglators to learn the identity of his Avian. It seemed that the whole of the Makara family was part of the underground, Crimson didn't really know what to feel about it, at the fact that the Prince's whole family was involved. It made him think of his own civilian siblings, they knew nothing about this, Meulin knew nothing of how her little sister battled her boyfriend, Karkat knew nothing of how his big brother was the leader of the most enigmatic criminal syndicates in the city. And if Crimson had his way, they would continue to know nothing for as long as they lived.

He felt no guilt at that knowledge, as long as they were safe then it was all worth it. And Huntress Leo fully agreed with him.

But unfortunately, he knew they'd eventually find out. And the thought made his stomach churn ever so slightly, how would they react to it all? That their seemingly 'innocent' siblings were in fact cunning murderers?

Crimson's train of thought stopped as the arena thrummed with noise, subjugglators filling half of the seats and eagerly awaiting the battle ahead. His own Shackled filled the other half, quieter but nonetheless excited as well. This would be the second time that Avian would enter the arena, but would he leave it victorious on his own? Besides him, Highblood let out a mirthful dark chuckle. Typical.

"**Qrow Davis.**" Highblood drawled, testing the name on his tongue, grinning widely to him. "**Motherfucking really now...**" To the large man's side, the Prince shifted, glancing between the arena, his father, Crimson and Huntress Leo.

He and Highblood were situated in a special viewing platform of the arena, only for leaders and their previous champions of the last fight. Had Avian not been fighting, he would have most likely be besides Huntress.

Crimson only lounged back on his chair, feigning disinterest and feeling Salamancer's shadows wash over him, hiding his face, his voice, his very identity. "Yes, *really...*" He drawled back, bloody red eyes trained on the

arena. *"I was not the one to pick his name, nor was he but he doesn't seem to mind."*

Highblood let out another dark chuckle, **"Got no qualms against his name Second Crimson, just motherfucking curious is all..."** He leered at him, **"Did this motherfucker really did the '*thing*' to Spades?"** Crimson's lips twitched upwards as Huntress let out a high-pitched snicker, the Prince let out a strangled cough that hid the sudden snort.

*"Yes, he did, as you say, 'do the thing' to our infamous Midnight Crew member."* The uproarious laughter that came after his words to be expected.

Avian's actions against Spades Slick were still being talked about even months after. It was a still a very hilarious subject.

**"Say, Second Crimson... Let's make this more interesting shall we?"**

That had Crimson jolting straight, wary instantly filling his system as he finally turned to fully look at the grinning man besides him. The sly and amused look in the man's visible eye did not help, nor did the fact his powers were uncomfortably *silent* while this was happening.

He always hated it when it went silent.

Crimson wanted to decline, to just continue on without a care and focus on the incoming fight but he knew he *had to* listen. Even with his powers silent, he knew this was something he had to hear. *"Interesting you say?"* He inquired quietly, bloody eyes narrowing at him. *"I'm listening Highblood."* Besides him, Huntress was tense and alert, listening in as well while the Prince looked utterly intrigued, clearly he didn't know what his father had in store.

The cunning smile he got in return made him want to make back up plans after back up plans and confer with Psiioniic and the others.

Luckily, he had someone on his side.

AR: Let's see what he wants...

---

Gamzee paced in his waiting room, mind racing as he felt his heart pace with him. It was thudding painfully in his chest as he thought of his opponent. Conflicting emotions clashing as he thought more and more about the incoming fight ahead.

Qrow Davis. Avian was Qrow Davis but looked like Dave Strider.

Just what the motherfuck was happening.

Didn't Dave Strider die four years ago? He'd been there, at the funeral, he hadn't been particularly close with Strider- if anything he had been at odds with the red-eyed boy, he had kept making fun of his family's fascination with clowns. The sudden disappearance of Dave Strider had been sudden, his death even more so. Gamzee had been curious sure when Dave was suddenly kidnapped out of nowhere by someone they *still* didn't know, and of course the teen was shocked when he turned up dead as a doorknob days later.

But now here he was, as Qrow Davis. But then again, there was a chance that this *wasn't* Dave Strider and was just a very similar-looking doppelganger, someone who shared his face but unlike how he usually acted, Gamzee wasn't stupid. The whispers of 'Angel' came to mind, how the Shackled Sufferers regarded Qrow-Avian as someone so much more, for having those wings, for existing.

As far as he knew it Strider's family was not part of the underground nor did they have any powers to speak of, above average strength sure but that was because they liked to stay fit and were strong enough to defend themselves but no supernatural powers were known or related to the Striders whatsoever. Certainly known that involved having bird-like wings!

Not even their close relatives the Lalondes had powers no matter how they were suspected to have, his dad made sure to check- they had potential sure but that potential was locked away and could not be unlocked without the proper trigger, the proper 'key'.

So what, Dave Strider dies, revives somehow and is now Qrow Davis?

Gamzee couldn't help but feel more and more curious as he thought about the mysterious blonde, and along with that curiosity was *excitement* because this teen, this glorious motherfucker with a *broken blade*, was going to be *his opponent*.

His heart sped up and already the youngest Makara could feel the adrenaline rushing through his veins in anticipation.

A dark chuckle escaped his mouth, one eerily similar to his father's, and the Shackled Sufferers stationed outside his room -two members of each group will keep watch on the championing warriors to keep fair, no sabotage and outside forces may interfere whatsoever, automatic forfeit should there be- they shivered as they could feel the battle hungry aura Gamzee was emitting, not to mention that *laugh*. They rooted solely for their brother in arms Avian and wished him the best of luck.

He may need it.

---

Qrow, unlike Gamzee, was calmly sitting in his waiting room. But just like Gamzee, his heart was pacing faster than normal.

He was going against Gamzee Makara *alone*.

Qrow had vague memories of one Gamzee Makara, one *troll* Gamzee Makara, rapping against him in his younger years -arguably one of the most *awesome* rap battles he's ever had in Paradox Space *ever*-, briefly talking with him and that was mostly it.

Though the ex-Strider knew that that Gamzee Makara was just as psychotic as this Gamzee Makara was, perhaps even more so, killing off the other trolls in the meteor -why does that make him feel *so angry*?- and basically being part of Cal, troll Gamzee was certainly a piece of work. At least this one hasn't killed his close friends, *yet*. And even then, he nor any of the Shackled would ever let that happen.

His goggles flash slightly, it's Hal.

AR: You doing alright there bro?

AW: doing as alright as ill ever be baby brother

AR: That is surprisingly honest and non-bullshitting of you Qrow.

AR: What's wrong.

AW: whats not wrong

AW: hal i showed my face

AW: \*\*\*my f a c e\*\*\*

AW: now the juggalo asses of the church know what i look like and guess who else is going to go gossip about the 'angel' of the shackled

AW: angel my ass

AR: I see

AW: not only that, now theyre gonna think that im this worlds dave strider too uggggh this is bullshiiit

AR: Bullshit as it is bro, them's the rules dude.

AR: If it weren't for Makara the Youngest calling dibs, you could have been scot free.

AR: But unfortunately he called dibs and the rule of dibs must be obliged.

AW: that is stupid

AW: \*\*\*underground hitman clown fucks\*\*\* are following the rule of dibs-

AW: never the fuck mind the rules of dibs are the rules of dibs i dont know what i was saying

AR: Mhmm.

AR: Feeling better Qrow?

AW: a little bit yeah

AW: thanks hal

AR: No problem bro, now go kick ass and come home.

AW: bossy little shit but aight dw my little brother

AW: big brothers bringing home the gold tonight

For as short as that talk was with Hal, it was enough to get his spirits up again. Besides, Qrow was determined to bring back victory to not only his group, but to his little brother.

Outside, the guarding subjugglators were gossiping to each other, with the new information they had at their disposal, they were free to gossip and talk to each other and those that knew. As long as they didn't breach the oath then they'd be fine but now they finally knew why the other Shackled referred Avian as an 'Angel' aside from his bizarre wings - they were obviously talking about how he was Dave goddamn Strider back from the dead, it wasn't that hard to believe since the subjugglators were semi-religious after all.

Qrow would groan and lament later on, ranting to his brother on how bullshit their situation was.

Suddenly there was the sound of a ringing bell, great, time for the fight.

---

**"MY DARKEST SUBJUGGLATORS OF MY MIRTHFUL MIRACULOUS MOTHERFUCKING CHURCH!"** Highblood roared, gaining the attention of the entire room and all of its occupants, all eyes turning to the viewing platform that Highblood, Crimson, Huntress and Prince were occupying, **"AND OUR ESTEEMED GUESTS OF HONORS, THE SHACKLED MOTHERFUCKING SUFFERERS!"**

He grinned, glancing at the Shackled Sufferers and their leader who merely nodded tersely both for the acknowledgement and their previous newfound agreement.

**"WE ARE GATHERED IN THIS ARENA TODAY... TO SEE OUR CHAMPIONS BEAT THE SHIT OUT OF EACH OTHER AND SEE WHO WINS!"** Highblood laughed, putting it bluntly as always, his subjugglators laughed with him, roaring with excitement. Crimson rolled his eyes then stepped forward to take over.

*"The Mirthful Church's Champion, Gamzee Makara; Bard, come forth and face your opponent."* He commanded, from the side of the arena, coming out of the gate. The Bard slinked out, smiling widely and looking absolutely

feral and excited as he twirled his battle clubs in his hands. *"The Shackled Sufferer's Champion, Qrow Davis; Avian, come forth and face your opponent."* And from the other side of the arena, Avian strolled out, face blank and serious while toting around his main weapon, his broken sword.

*"As per the deal, should the Shackled Sufferers win then the allegiance will continue and the Church will assist and side with us should the time come."* Crimson said aloud, turning to Highblood who smirked at him.

**"And should the motherfucking Mirthful Church win then the allegiance is void and we can either be motherfucking neutral or against you shits when the time comes."** Highblood replied, giving him a sly smile, **"Or it should be, you see my motherfucking brethren, the deal's been added to, we got more shit now to agree on!"** There was gasps of surprise from both sides, Avian looked at them both in shock while the Bard was impatient but curious.

*"This time, if we win, the Church shall permanently align themselves with Sufferers. No more fights that will decide our allegiance, you will forever be allies with the Shackled. Not only that, but the Bard will join the Shackled as an official member."* Say what?

**"Then if we win, the fights will motherfucking continue on like always... and the Avian shall join as an official motherfucking member of the Church."** Say **WHAT?!**

Avian stared at Crimson with wide eyes, glancing between him and Highblood. While the Bard didn't seem to have any oppositions about the new deal; Avian clearly did.

***"Let the battle begin!"*** Both leaders chorused and Avian didn't have any time to complain as the Bard instantly dashed towards him with a wild cackle.

God fucking dammit Crimson!

---

AR: He's going to hit you for this.



SC: I know.

AR: He's going to be \*\*\*super pissed.\*\*\*

SC: Yes, Aviator, I know that.

AR: Like \*\*\*\*super mega fucking pissed\*\*\*\* at you oh dearest leader of ours.

SC: Please refrain from stating the obvious and pay attention to the fight, we can discuss on how agitated Qrow will be after the fight.

AR: I can't say that I'm seeing you in a bright light either boss.

SC: I'll make it up to you two in the end, I promise you that.

AR: You better. Because if he loses, know that wherever Avian goes, I go.

SC: I know that very well Aviator, Huntress Leo is also at odds against it but fret not, you and I know what the outcome to this will be.

AR: Do we really?

SC: Of course.

SC: Avian has more motivation to win now, and a motivated Avian is the best bet we have against the Church's Bard.

SC: And in the end, we'll have a new member to welcome as well.

AR: I question you and your powers and everything that stands in this world.

AR: You better be right or else bro and I will be painting our faces and preaching to the circus.

SC: :)

AR: I feel reassured already.

---

## Chapter End Notes

AAAAAAnd done.

No official fighting in this chapter but the next chapter's hopefully sooner than this one. Next chapter, the fight officially begins between Gamzee and Qrow! Admittedly this is probably one of my shorter chapters for this story, sorry for that but I wanted to dish this chapter out and update this story. Sorry for the late update!

# Take me to Church (3)

## Chapter Summary

The real battle begins

## Chapter Notes

Okay, here it is, as I promised;

Qrow vs Gamzee

STRIFE

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

"*Aghk!*" Some spit mixed with blood escaped his lips as he was knocked back, a semi-solid hit on his stomach was the cause for his newest pain and injury but thankfully his opponent didn't managed to land a solid and direct hit against his abdomen, that would've been *bad*. He rolled a good distance away, clutching his stomach and panting.

Qrow wasn't given time to properly recuperate from his new wounds as Gamzee dashed at him once again, quickly, he leaped over the charging clown and into the air, aching wings flapping once as he took to the air temporarily -he knew very well he couldn't stay in the air for long- to get a chance of relief. Even with Gamzee launching one of his clubs at him, Qrow managed to dodge them before diving in with his sword.

He ignored the pain of his body as he twisted in his attack, showing off impressive and almost unnatural flexibility as he lashed out at his opponent, Gamzee hissed as he was given another slashing cut on his arm as he blocked the resulting assault before returning the favor with the one club he had in hand, the previous one was over at the other side of the arena from when Gamzee attempted to hit Qrow out of the air with it and failed.

Around them, the arena was in chaos as both sides roared their encouragement, their discouragement, their support and their jeers for the fighting champions. Up in the viewing platform for the leaders and previous champions, contrary to their noisy followers, it was tense and silent for the four occupants as they watched the conflict.

Underneath the scrutiny of what felt like the *whole world* watching over them, Gamzee and Qrow were in it to succeed. Somewhat.

Qrow needed to win, he was *not* going to become a fucking clown lackey, not only that, he wasn't going to let Hal become one either. Knowing his dumbass little brother, he'd join as well and he like *hell* was he going to let that happen to the *both* of them; much less to fucking Hal! Not to mention he was going to have some fucking *words* with Kankri when this was all over.

Gamzee on the other hand, didn't really care if he won or not, not really. Sure, winning might be a motherfucking awesome thing but he was mostly in it for the thrill of the fight, but then again, most of his people were expecting him to win. Eh. Either way, the adrenaline he felt as he clashed with Qrow, it was *exhilarating* and Gamzee's bloodthirsty grin widened as he eagerly followed after Qrow, getting more and more enthralled by the way the other fought, especially when the fucker took to the air with those miraculous fucking *wings* of his, it was motherfucking *beautiful*.

It was nothing like the Summoner's wings, it *couldn't compare at all*.

The ex-Strider skidded back, he quickly used his wings as a temporary shield, gritting his teeth as Gamzee collided with his feathery barricade. Surprisingly or not, his wings were quite strong, he found out in a similar situation. In all actuality, the bones in his wings should be breaking by the force of the Gamzee's hard ass juggling club but his wings were unbelievably strong, though Qrow knew his back would be sore as fuck afterwards when he came home.

Seeing his chance in a brief pause in Gamzee's attacks, Qrow used his wings to surprise him, flaring them wide and knocking Gamzee on his ass, using the opportunity to try and take a stab at the youngest Makara. It only

managed to nick him, his broken sword stabbing into the ground instead as the other managed to dodge just in time, showing off his own flexibility and strength as he kicked Qrow away, the elder Davis ended up skidding back on his side, groaning as he held his jaw, damn, any harder and he'd have a dislocated jaw, though he knew he'd end up with one hell of a bruise instead.

Gamzee grinned, seeing his opponent down on the ground while he himself stood tall. Though, he knew it was far from over, and it filled him with excitement as he sees Qrow get back on his feet, he could practically see the defiance in the other's eyes despite the fact they were covered with red goggles.

He was going to love this.

---

Hal sighed, trying to release the tension in his mostly-mechanical body but failed to do so completely.

He hated this. The feeling of utter *uselessness*.

Hal winced as he watched his brother skidding back from an attack from the second spawn of the Makara head, Kankri wasn't kidding that about how the family was strong, but then again, being the son of the behemoth of a man Highblood, aka Kieran Makara, he wasn't surprised that Gamzee inherited his freakish strength despite the fact he mostly looked like a tall lanky teen with only lean muscles.

The ex-A.I. had hacked into the building's cameras, the secret ones, the ones that overlooked the arena and such- not to mention he had a first person view of the whole fight with Qrow's goggles, something that was a bit disturbing as Qrow clashed head-to-head with Gamzee, giving Hal a clear sight of the insane eyes and disturbing grin the young subjuglator had on his face. Yeah, sometimes first person views weren't all that nice.

His robotic fingers dug into the arms of his chair as he continues to watch the fight, he couldn't tell whether he was glad or not that he wasn't able to come to the arena personally. He couldn't really go places on the account of

his lack of legs, something he was hoping to fix now that he had two functioning arms now, and even if he went he'd be literally handicapped and wouldn't be able to properly retaliate if ever he was attacked.

It was why Qrow and the others were adamant of him staying back, he was more suited for down-low and other missions, hacking and online machinations were his forte, not to mention his robotics were almost second to none. Still, it stung a bit at the feeling of being unable to back his brother up in an actual fight, but one day, he'd do it.

One day, when he finished building and completing his legs, he'd be able to help his brother so much more and be there for him.

Not to mention finally be able to wander around a bit more freely, as awesome as his custom-made and modified chair was, he wanted some more mobility, he wanted some gogdamn *legs* dammit.

*Ping*

Hal's attention snapped at the sudden sound, immediately opening another window to see who the fuck it was pestering him at a time like this-

Oh, it was just Calliope.

--uranianUmbra [UU] is pestering roboticAutomaton [RA]--

UU: hello lovey ^u^

UU: i realize how late is trUly is bUt i know for a fact that yoU don't really sleep mUch

UU: which by the way is still Utterly Unhealthy, yoU shoUld start getting into the habit of sleeping more hal

RA: Hey Callie.

UU: good evening hal

UU: hope i'm not intrUding on anything important

UU: i jUst got the time to contact yoU now

UU: i've been awefUlly bUsy as yoU know.

RA: Well, its certainly important but I'm appreciating the distraction right now.

UU: distraction?

RA: Right now, I am unwillingly observing an event that is involving Qrow, least to say, I am not liking the event at all.

UU: oh no OnO

UU: can't yoU stop the event?

RA: No, I can't because it's fucking necessary.

RA: The only thing I can do is hope for the best.

RA: Which is for my bro to win this thing.

RA: Which he will.

RA: Because, you know.

RA: He's my bro and all and he's the fucking best.

UU: ;UnU

UU: i certainly hope that yoUr brother wins the event as well

UU: is he getting hurt?

RA: He may or may not be getting his ass kicked.

UU: OnO!!

RA: Don't worry, he's also kicking ass too.

UU: ;>n>

RA: Qrow is going to win this.

RA: He's going to win and come home and I'm going to make sure he gets patched the fuck up.

RA: Wrapped in all the bandages, \*\*all of them\*\*.

UU: my, i presUme that woUld be a lot of bandages?

RA: You presume right.

UU: well, i wish yoUr brother lUck in the event. may he win withoUt any serioUs worry?

RA: Thanks Callie.

UU: certainly no problem at all hal, yoU and yoUr brother are one of my most precioUs people.

UU: i can't wait to meet yoU both one day

UU: if that day ever comes anyway ~n~

RA: Of course it'll come.

RA: And when it does, bro and I will treat you to a fuck ton of candy.

RA: Like holy shit, give the whole fucking world all the types of diabetes amount of candy.

UU: >u<

Hal smiled, leave it to Calliope to cheer him up.

*"Time to motherfucking take this up a notch."* Hal's attention went back to the fight, apprehension filling him as he sees Gamzee's eyes spark unnatural purple. Shit, *shit shit shit!*

A thing to know about the Makara's, about the Mirthful Church in general, was that not only were they brutes of ridiculous strength. They also had the ability to control fear to an extent, Kurloz had used it frequently in the last fight and it had been a *bitch* to deal with- but fortunately Qrow and Nepeta managed to plow through it together.

Here, Qrow was on his own and had already taken a good beating. Not only that but Hal was worried that what happened with Dirk and the others would enhance the effect the fear mongering ability had on his brother.

RA: Shit.

RA: Shit this is not good.

UU: what's not good?



RA: Sorry Callie but I'll have to be MIA for a bit.

RA: Fuck.

--roboticAutomaton [RA] is idle--

UU: hal?

UU: oh dear

UU: i hope everything is okay

UU: i wish yoU both lUck!

--uranianUmbra [UU] is idle--

Hal cursed, flinching back at the unexpected scream that obviously belonged to Qrow, it seemed that his worries were justified since this scream was so much more worse than the last.

"Qrow!"

---

All was fucking fine and dandy at the start.

Qrow could take a beating, he was a tough son of a bitch. Plus, this wasn't his first hoedown with a Makara.

He survived against *Kurloz*, who was definitely stronger than Gamzee *and* managed to beat the fucker. But then again, he had Nepeta's help in that fight, which was fair because they both knew that individually, they stood no actual chance against Kurloz. Nepeta and him would have been fucked if they had fought against the eldest son all on their own.

Gamzee on the other hand, was less experienced and Qrow knew he had a fighting chance against him.

Or, at least he thought he did until Gamzee pulled that bullshit fear power he, his brother and asshole father had.

Now things weren't as fine and dandy as they started, now shit was getting *real*.

"*Time to motherfucking take this up a notch.*" The instant that sentence left the youngest Makara's mouth, Qrow dreaded, and when his eyes began to glow an unorthodox purple, he dreaded even *more* and instinctively, his feathers flared and bristled at the unnatural feel of fear that licked his senses. He'd done the very same thing when Kurloz used the same goddamn ability against him and Nepeta. Though noticeably, he could tell it was weaker than Kurloz's, which was great but that didn't change the fact it still affected him almost as bad as before.

If not, it was a bit worse.

Back then, he had his sword in his hand, he had Nepeta backing him up and he would back her up, but now; his main sword was stabbed into the ground and Nepeta was up in the platform, he was alone against a mini-behemoth of strength that was Gamzee Makara.

Qrow bit back a snarl that lodged itself in his throat, he threw himself back, away from Gamzee, away from his fear mongering powers, away from the *threat to his existence*- fuck. He needed to get his sword back.

It wasn't like he wasn't stocked up on swords, in fact, he had plenty of them in his sylladex- only problem was that he wasn't allowed to use them in the battle. It was one of the rules, you weren't allowed to access your sylladex during the fight, not allowed to use the weapons you had stored in it. You could only use the weapons you brought with you in person into the arena and nothing else.

Getting extra weapons out of the sylladex, unless it was ammunition, was a big fat fucking NO.

Thus Gamzee was stuck with his two clubs and Qrow was stuck with his sword... and a couple of hidden weapons he had himself.

Qrow burst into action, hands moving quickly from his belt, his *utility* belt- which meant fucking *pockets* motherfuckers. He took out a few smokebombs from one pocket, tossing it across the arena and filling it with dark blinding smoke. He had those on his person, they weren't in his

sylladex, it wasn't against the rules and he's seen and heard of people doing similar tactics.

Gamzee let out a roar, briefly angry at the sudden smoky darkness that engulfed him, that was *cheeky*. Tactical, but utterly *cheeky* in his personal opinion... he liked it. His scowl turned into a smirk before he sent out a strong wave of fear, listening intently and grinned savagely at the choked gasp that came from his left, he dashed towards the sound, sending another wave just to be sure.

Qrow on the other hand, was not having a fun time, the wave of fear hit him square on and it *showed him his fears*.

***Death.***

***Dying.***

***Repetition .***

***Die once, die again, and again, and again.***

***Doomed Daves all around--*** He gasped again, managing to get back to reality *just* in time, he rolled forward back into the smoke as Gamzee smashed his club into the space that he once occupied, a web of cracks forming the instant the club met with nothing but the floor. Gamzee let out an annoyed huff before sending another wave, using the same tactic once more.

Qrow gritted his teeth and was *taken under*.

***It was hot.***

***Too hot.***

***Metal and dark heinous high-pitched laughter.***

***Bro--*** Qrow forced himself out, *NO*, just, ***no***. This time, he let the snarl tear out of his throat as he focused at the task at hand. Get his sword, kick ass,

win. Get the sword, kick clown ass, win. Get sword, kick ass, win. Fucking repetition.

*He was going to win dammit.*

Qrow *let* Gamzee hit him, knocking him *just so* while gritting and ignoring the pain as he forced himself to kneel as he skidded, *right. Besides. His. Sword.*

### **Get sword.**

He grabbed it, pulling hard and viciously pulling it out of the ground, a chunk of the ground comes with it but he doesn't care, he twists the disc-like knob and suddenly his broken sword was fixed and once again whole, surprising the crowd and his opponent. He takes to the air but faces Gamzee with determination.

*Check-* next on his list;

### **Kick ass.**

*A work in progress-* he was more than happy to work on.

Gamzee on the other hand, was ecstatic Ah, so that was his goal. Well, too bad it was his as well- his other club was right besides him and once again, Gamzee had both his clubs and Qrow had his sword.

Both crackled, energy, adrenaline and the forces of their wills practically coming off of them in waves.

The Bard stared up to the Angel who was almost frozen in mid air, a tense moment.

A tense moment that breaks as both champions, the Bard of the Mirthful Church, the Angel of the Shackled Sufferers, ***clashed.***

And only one champion would win.

---

"Roxy darling?"

Roxy blinked, glancing up from her laptop to see her mother at her doorway, "Yeah Mom?" She replied, taking her attention away from her laptop to focus on her mother. A thankful distraction really, she was taking a gander against Hal's systems again. She really wanted to meet him one day, even if it weren't for the whole, 'Dave conspiracy' thing going on, she had to admit, Hal was a goddamn *genius* and she wanted to meet him for the coding and possibly robotic prodigy he was.

"Have you seen my phone? I can't seem to find it." Rosaline said with a frown.

"Which one?"

"The one with the lavender casing and skull stickers sweetheart."

"That old thing? No, not really. Don't you have, like, three other phones that are more up to date than that one?"

Rosaline sighed, "Yes but it was my favorite phone, I've had it for years, though then again lately it *has* been a bit difficult to work with it."

In the shadows and another section of the house, one certain not-really-feline was humming lightly as they figured a few things out.

It was a bit hard to work a phone with tentacles and paws after all.

---

--felineTentacles [FT] began pestering turntimeFeathertail [TF]--

FT: Yoy have no idea hoq hard it is to funxtion this wirh thw limited limvs thst I have.

FT: It's gonedtly a hasslw

FT: You kniw who thos is alresdy, send mr a loxatiom and a time so yot can puxk me up.

FT: Sonetime this week?

FT: ;3

FT: You serm to be budy, reply whwn yoi can brother dearest.

--felineTentacles [FT] ceased pestering turntimeFeathertail [TF]--

---

*"Q-Avian!"*

The instant it was over, Nepeta and Kankri leaped down into the arena, the window opening at their leisure as they did so. Behind them, Kieran and Kurloz followed afterwards, rocking the ground in their landing but it didn't matter to the others as around them the cheers were almost deafening.

The fight was over and done.

Kankri and Nepeta knelt by the severely injured Qrow's side, having finally succumbed to unconsciousness and his wounds. Across him, Gamzee was in a similar state that had both his father and older brother kneeling besides him as well.

Kieran Makara took his youngest son into his arms, Kankri doing the same to Qrow.

**"MOTHERFUCKERS OF THE CHURCH AND SHACKLED!"**

Highblood roared, gaining the attention of the whole arena. **"The fight is motherfucking over! Rejoice! Fucking celebrate motherfuckers!"** He commanded as he turned to Kankri with a wide grin, he turned and bowed towards Kankri, stiffly, Kankri returned the bow before looking towards the crowd.

*"The winner has been declared!"*

Kieran cracked a wide and dark smile, Kankri smiled back, though it was tense and sharp, **"May the fucking deal be finalized Second Crimson, but first, we tend to our champions."**

"Of course..."

With that, both leaders along with the previous champions left the arena.

Nepeta backtracked though, to pick up a pair of broken goggles.

Damn, Hal must be worried sick.

---

"All according to plan... It was such a close call though, but as you said Master, he won."

...

"Of course Master, I will immediately prepare for the next phase of the plan."

...

"Yes, yes. Though we are not half-way done, we are still so close. It is quite marvelous Master."

...

"Goodbye Master, just leave it up to your most excellent and humble servant~"

---

***He stared up, and up, and up.***

***The sound of ticks and tocks were/are maddening.***

***Someone is/was screaming-***

***It's not him-***

***It's him-***

***Who was screaming?***

***He died.***

***Tick.Tock.Tick.Tock.Tick.Tock.Tick.Tock.Tick.Tock.Tick.Tock.***

***"Hoohoo. Time to wake up~~"***

***He's alive.***

Qrow's eyes snapped open and a rasping gasp escaped his mouth.

"He's awake!"

Red-orange-red eyes squinted as his vision blurred, he grunted in slight pain as metallic hands ***-hard as steel, trying to get his attention, failing-*** wrapped themselves around his waist. "Woah, careful there Hal!" A voice says as Qrow has to blink several times to make sense of the yellow-ish color that appears in his vision along with the hands along with the weight of a small person on his chest. "Jesus Hal, you're lucky he's numb with drugs or else he'd be screaming."

Hal. It really was Hal, hugging him as he laid on what felt like a bed. It was soft but he liked his nest better- not that he'd willingly admit.

It takes a moment for his brain to catch up with everything that happened and the first thing that leaves his mouth is-

"I'm not becoming a fucking juggalo ass clown am I."

The silence that comes afterward does not help the apprehension that he's feeling.

Then-

"You're a fucking idiot bro."

An offended indignant snort leaves him, he opens his mouth to reprimand his younger brother but pauses as he feels the other tremble. Oh. Oh...

Shit.



Carefully and semi-awkwardly, Qrow returns the impromptu hug, the trembling does not abate, if anything it intensifies a bit.

Damn, he feels like a douchebag now.

"That's because you are."

Oh he said that out loud.

"Yep."

"I need to stop doing that."

"Yep."

Qrow smiles, *now* the trembling abates, and Hal is just draping himself over him now.

"Qrow."

He tenses slightly as Kankri, Salamancer's shadows were gone so he was clear to everyone in the room -Casey, Nepeta and Dexter were there too-, came to view. He looked apologetic.

"Kankri." Terse, angry, which he had the right to be. The deal had changed, he hadn't been informed about it right until the last minute. But he was also scared, he didn't want to be a juggalo.

"My sincerest apologies for that, Highblood had proposed the deal at the last minute and I had to accept." Shit, he was probably still talking out loud.

"You could have rejected it." Was his raspy reply, he felt thirsty- he thanked Nepeta as she offered him a glass of water.

"I could have, but I couldn't." What, "But good news Qrow." What good news?

"We have a new recruit now thanks to you."

It takes another moment for him to process that.

"What."

In another room, one bandaged Gamzee Makara was pouting as Kurloz informed him about his loss.

Damn.

But hey, at least he got to fight Avian, and *goddamn* was it a good fight.

The injured Makara wondered if Qrow was up to regular spars or something...

Hey, there might be a perk to becoming a Shackled Sufferer after all, if it meant seeing Qrow more often then sign him up.

The clock is ticking, the ball is rolling.

It was one step over another.

This was just the beginning.

## Chapter End Notes

[illegible]

There we go!

More stuff and more stuff, I'm tired as fuck but here's the chapter. I can officially say that Arc 1 is over! What is the name of this Arc? I have no fucking idea but Arc 2 starts next chapter. Hope you enjoyed, see you next time~

# A Tentative Step

## Chapter Notes

Hold on to your butts everyone!  
Things are about to...

Be calm for a chapter or two.

AND THEN SHIT HITS THE FAN AND IT HITS THE FAN HARD.  
WERE DOING THIS MAN.

WE

ARE

DOING

THIS

So, buckle up and enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

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--turntimeFeathertail [TF] began pestering shackledCrimson [SC]--

TF: do we really have to accept him

TF: why cant we just leave him where he is

TF: for a matter of a fact why the fuck are \*\*hal, nep and i\*\* the ones who have to deal with him

SC: The deal has been made Qrow.

SC: We can't go back on our word, you know that.

TF: still doesnt explain why the fuck youre making \*\*us\*\* his babysitters kankri

SC: He, Kieran and Kurloz requested it.

SC: It's the least we can do for them.

TF: bullroar

SC: Such language.

TF: fuck

TF: fine

TF: this beats being a juggalo anyway

TF: but the moment he tries something im dumping his ass on some other guy

TF: got that

SC: That's as good of an agreement that I'll receive from you so yes.

SC: I got that.

SC: How are your wounds.

RA: They're healing just fine, calculating his healing factor and a few other things, he should be fine in a week or two.

SC: An admirable recovery time.

TF: doesnt change the fact it hurts like shit you dumbass

RA: If you'd just stay still and rest like you're supposed to it might just hurt less.

RA: Or perhaps even take the medicine?

TF: fuck that

TF: fuck both of that

TF: im not staying in bed for two weeks

TF: and the medicine can go out the window

TF: you know it doesnt really work for me

TF: not for long anyway

RA: Then just suck it up and stop complaining.

TF: cheeky little shit

RA: Learned from the best.

SC: As much as this brotherly moment is endearing and all.

SC: Gamzee should be stopping by tomorrow with Nepeta.

SC: Treat him civilly you two.

SC: I must get going.

TF: uuugggh

TF: alright

TF: just bring every fucking one to casa de davis why dont you

TF: dont literally do that though

SC: I shall refrain from bringing everyone to your base Qrow, just a selectively handful of people.

TF: fuck off crimson

SC: As you wish.

--shackledCrimson [SC] ceased pestering turntimeFeathertail [TF]--

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Qrow groaned, burying his head in the cushions of the couch with his shades loosely hanging from his fingers as his hand hung off the side of the couch.

Great.

Besides him in his chair, Hal merely sighed, but ran his robotic fingers through Qrow's hair in an action of comfort and affection.

It was appreciated even though Qrow said nothing, they both knew it anyway.

It had barely been a few days since the fight, possibly a day or two since, and Qrow was feeling sore and achey all over. His back was sore, his chest was sore, his legs were extra achey with twinges of pain here and there, his arms were all three; sore, pained and achey.

Alright he might be exaggerating since it's been two days or something, it was a lot worse during the first day and the medicine wore off quickly afterwards but he still felt it.

"Well, at least we're not slathering make up on our faces and honking horns." Hal said, giving his brother a reassuring grin as Qrow glanced up at him and reluctantly agreed, out of the two consequences, this was clearly the lesser evil.

Still, that didn't mean that he *liked* the fact he had to be babysitter to the guy that beat his ass, granted he dished out an equal beating as well and actually *won* their match but still.

His whole body felt completely tenderized.

Fucking tender as shit, grade A+ tender bird meat. Put that shit on a hot pan and cook it to its supreme and full on deliciousness tender-aaand there went his stomach.

He was hungry.

---

"Jesus fucking christ Gamzee! What the fuck happened?!"

Gamzee only smiled as Karkat fussed over his disheveled and hurt appearance, *damn* could Qrow fight. He couldn't wait until their next one. He suppressed his bloodthirst and lazily waved off his best friend's concern, "I'm good Karbro, just got roughed up is all." Understatement but he didn't really want to worry Karkat that much.

"Is all? *Is all?!"* Karkat growled, "Dammit Gamzee you have a fucking *black eye* and a *broken wrist*." He hissed indignantly, well technically he had more than that but those had mostly healed up alright, his family's healing factor was weird but impressive. It mostly focused on his more serious injuries like concussions, near-fatal wounds but left alone other injuries like bruises and the broken wrist alone, letting it heal normally.

He was glad for it though, if this was how Karkat reacted to his black eye and wrist, he might just have an aneurysm from his fractured ribs, previous stab wounds and more. Like he said, Qrow could *fight*.

"No kidding KK, GZ lookth like thhit." Sollux agreed as he looked at Gamzee's face with a grimace, "How the fuck did you even get it anyway GZ?" He asked.

Currently Gamzee was back in school after a few days of being involved with an 'accident', "Got motherfucking ambushed by some motherfuckers." Gamzee lied smoothly, smiling without a care, "Don't worry though Solbro, got rescued and shit." He'd thought about the cover story all on his own without the help of his brother or father and he was quite proud of it.

From across the classroom, he could see Nepeta pretending to glance at him worriedly but in truth, they were glances of contempt. The little feline-oriented girl was still held a grudge against him for hurting Qrow huh? Well, what else did she expect? They were in a *battle*, of course someone was going to get hurt in a *battle*. He hid his snort and just sent her a calm, lazy smile, it sharpened a bit at the small almost unnoticeable bristle that Nepeta hid with ease as she spoke with Equius.

It was almost bizarre to think that Nepeta was The Huntress, though it was kind of obvious with who Nepeta's mother was. Then again, he'd really thought Muelin would've been the one who inherited the title regardless of her hearing problem. Oh well, it was alright.

Besides, it wasn't as if Nepeta could really do anything.

Things were still a bit tense between the two gangs, and Crimson wouldn't let Nepeta sabotage or do anything that may break their treaty and decision so soon. She was obviously smarter than that, she couldn't touch him, yet. But even if she could in the future, Gamzee was resolute to be prepared for it.

At any rate thought, he was excited for today. Today, he was going to finally, *finally*, see Qrow again. He'd be going over to Qrow's base, as he learned it was collectively called 'The Nest' by everyone else of the

Shackled Sufferers, and he was going to see Qrow in person again! Unfortunately they were both on probation on fighting and missions, they had to heal up first before they could even consider fighting against each other again, which Gamzee was fine with.

Qrow would fight better if he was at his best, he couldn't *wait* for the future spars he had in store for him.

"G-Gamzee? Hello? You okay there." He blinked as Tavros got his attention. "You kind of dozed off for a moment there Gamzee." The brown-haired teen told him with a nervous smile.

Ah, Tavros. "Nah, I'm fine Tavbro, I am, motherfucking A-okay." He reassured him with a lazy grin. Tavros gives him a relieved one in return.

He hears Karkat snort, "You see? This is why most people think you smoke weed you dumbass." He snapped, gaining his attention again, "You are not 'motherfucking A-okay', Jesus fucking Christ Gamzee." He breathed exasperatedly, massaging his temple. Gamzee doesn't really help since all he does is smile more at his best friend.

It was so nice to see him so caring.

Sollux laughs besides him, shaking his head, "Kind of, you're jutht tho lazy and laidback GZ, like- thith thtuff doethn't even phathe you."

Gamzee just shrugged, "I just motherfucking go with the flow." He emphasized with a lazy wave of his hand, mimicking a 'flow' before dropping it back on his desk.

Karkat looked frustrated, he opened his mouth only for the bell to ring.

*BRIIIING*

Class was starting and reluctantly, Karkat moved back to his desk that was situated a few desks away from Gamzee, Sollux sat right besides him and Tavros was nearby. Gamzee smiled, inwardly he was eager for the day to end so Nepeta could take him to The Nest and see Qrow again.



Also, didn't Qrow have a little brother or something?

Oh well, he couldn't wait to meet the little motherfucker as well.

---

--turntimeFeatherTail [TF] began pestering felineTentacles [FT]--

TF: holy shit are you drunk or something

TF: dear god it took me a minute to get what you wrote lmao

TF: nice typing sis/bro/sib

TF: cant wait to pick you up and yeah we can do this week

TF: after my back stops being so sore and shit but yeah

TF: meet us at the derse bar

TF: the one near the sasscre joke shop and bunp n rump on friday

TF: risky i know but itll have to do since its easier to find and i have no idea where the fuck you are

TF: looking forward to see you cheshire

TF: you have got a lot of explaining to do

--turntimeFeathertail [TF] ceased pestering felineTentacles [FT]--

--felineTentacles [FT] began pestering turntimeFeathertail [TF]--

FT: Excellent :3

FT: And hudh its hard to typw properly but im gettung the hang of it.

FT: Anywsy see you pn Frisay brother

--felineTentacles [FT] ceased pestering turntimeFeathertail [TF]--

---

Cheshire hummed as they slipped the phone back to where it belonged.

They could only hope that Hal and Qrow would make her an easier, hands-free computing device. It was hard to type with tentacles and paws after all.

Still, they were looking forward to this Friday, granted that was if they were able to escape and be able to meet up with Qrow but they would manage.

They had a lot to talk about.

---

Calliope stood tense as she and Caliborn stood side by side in front with their heads bowed and bodies high-strung like taut string. Besides her and Caliborn was the the rest of the crew- at least, the crew that were in the country. Cans was still out of country but he was on his way back, slowly. Clover was... somewhere, really, who even knew with the strange midget and superstitious of a man.

*"I take it they're ready now?"* His voice is grating but faint as ever.

Besides Caliborn, Snowman spoke, **"As ready as they'll ever be. I would've wanted a few more years to train them to their best but they're adequate enough for now. But obviously, you already know that old man."** Calliope twitches, it thankfully goes unnoticed, just as Caliborn's clenched fists.

Talking as if they weren't in the rooms themselves, they hated that. But they could do nothing but just stay silent, stay still and keep their heads down.

*"Good. Now we can begin the next phase..."* Next phase? Calliope resisted the urge to look up, to open her mouth and ask questions until her breath ran out. She wouldn't get answers and all she *would* get was a punishment for interrupting and speaking when she wasn't spoken to, she wasn't as skilled and respected as the others to do that yet.

The sound of footsteps are clear in her head, he stops in front of something and the lighting of the room dims as the screen glowed. *"The boy has won over the Church. As our Master has planned and knew, and now, we nudge a few things in place. It's time for the bird to come out of its nest no? Reunite with its flock~"* Normally Calliope liked riddles, but whenever it came out of *his* mouth, she temporarily abhorred them- her mind lingers on the usage of avian lingo.

Avian...

*Avian.*

Her already stiff posture stiffens even more as her mind *clicks*- "*Ah, always the sharp one Calliope.*" When had he moved?

A glowing white hand gently takes hold of her chin, lifting her head and her gaze went from the floor to the man before her.

She can't see behind the circular and glowing orb that covers his head, she avoids looking at him and instead looks at the screen behind the man.

An orange shaded gaze stares blankly at her in return. She *knows* who he is, she-

Oh...

"*Let's keep this nice and simple... We have a party to plan for~*"

Dread settles in her stomach, but she does nothing and merely nods as the hand releases her chin.

The picture changes and focuses on three people, she clearly recognizes them and the dread grows.

So this was the event her father had been planning for...

---

"I still don't get *why* we have to do this whole event thing." Dirk grumbled as he sat back against the couch, Bro sitting right beside him while D was on the recliner on the side, both busy with their own things. At D's look he sighed, "Alright, alright, I *do* know why we have to the whole event thing. Charity and what not, but why do *I* have to go." It was childish to whine like this, but he couldn't help it, there were clearly more important things to worry about than a charity event he and his brothers supposedly *had* to attend.

Said Charity Party Event was about cancer, due to D and Bro's popularity and status as celebrities, these things were to be expected. Dirk had nothing against charities, sometimes he enjoyed them and was glad they could help fund for these things, but at the moment, he was so focused on his brother,

he found the charity as something that would interfere with his research about said brother. Which, unfortunately, was running dry as a spent well in the middle of a desert.

He wasn't going to give up though, like hell he was going to give up.

"Don't complain and just suck it up." Bro grunted, as much as he wanted to agree with Dirk, finding D-Qrow *was very* important but they couldn't really neglect their responsibilities.

Both D and he had actual jobs to do, they were adults that had to look out for their lives. Granted financially they were *very* well off and could give themselves a lot of slack, they still had responsibilities to do. Make no mistake though, if the chance ever came, they would stop they were doing in a heart beat if it ever involved Qrow. And even if they didn't really want to, like Dirk, they didn't have anything against charities but it was an important event and they weren't the only ones coming thankfully.

Most of their friends would be coming as well. At least they wouldn't be alone during the whole thing.

At most, they could stay half-way before excusing themselves.

Still, Dirk wished he could just stay home and continue looking for clues, no matter how futile it seemed to be.

D sighed, shaking his head before continuing the conversation he was having with Rosanna on his laptop.

---

TT: sorry dirk was complaining about the charity thing we have to go to next week

TT: tbh i dont want to go either

TG: But you have to.

TG: We all do.

TT: i know i know

TT: but we just want to continue looking for qrow

TT: its been how long and theres STILL no sign of him

TG: Patience is virtue David.

TT: idfc about virtue

TT: we want our brother back

TT: want to know what the everloving fuck is happening

TT: WAS happening

TT: jesus ro for YEARS we thought he was dead and now he shows up doing shit knows what

TG: Like I said, patience is virtue.

TG: Besides, hasn't both our and our kid's search hitting a firm dead end?

TG: Roxy still hasn't gotten any further in her attempt to 'haxx' Hal and gain more information.

TG: She's so focused on it, Roxanne, Rose and I had to physically drag her away from her computer and force her to rest.

TT: i heard

TT: also bro and i had to do the same with dirk

TT: i guess we need to lay off with looking for now

TT: especially the kids and shit

TT: cant risk their health with this

TT: damn now i feel fucking dumb

TT: what kind of brother am i

TG: Mostly a good one David.

TG: You three are good brothers but there are times where you have to rest and relax or else you'll end up working yourselves to death.

TG: We can't like that happen now can we.

TT: fuck nah

TT: we striders will get through this

TT: were tough shit

TG: Of course, how could I expect anything else.

TT: thx ro  
TT: needed that

TG: Anytime David.

TT: now about this charity event  
TT: whats in plan and whos hosting it?

TG: Hm, there isn't much information on it.  
TG: Though I do know the one hosting the Charity is a peculiar and mysterious man.

TT: go on

TG: Not a lot of people really know him but his investments are spot on, I suppose he likes his privacy since even though he's funding and hosting the event, it's most likely he won't show up.

TT: wtf  
TT: why not  
TT: why do we have to go if hes not going to show up anyway?

TG: Speculation and rumor says that he has cancer and rarely leaves his home.

TT: oh

TG: As for attending said event, well, we were invited and it'd be rude to just decline it.

TT: fair point  
TT: whats the dudes name?

TG: I don't know his full name, no one does but he usually goes by Dr. Scratch.

---

Kankri massaged his temple and mentally counted to calm himself.

He should've known. Really, he should. Have. *Known*.

He'd anticipated the fact that afterwards that Kieran would eventually tell Kurloz and Gamzee his identity. Or well, if he hadn't then preferably Gamzee would find out on his own since he was now a member of the Shackled Sufferers and almost all of the Sufferers knew who Crimson was.

Kieran was the only other adult besides Dexter who knew he was as well, from the very start he knew who Kankri was and at first it set him on edge until Dexter comforted him and told him Kieran wouldn't tell anyone unless it would personally benefit him. And even then, the man was already unpredictable as it was.

At any rate, with how Kurloz glanced at him frequently and stared at him, he presumed that the former happened and that Kieran informed him of his identity.

The staring was starting to grate his nerves a bit but he took it in stride and acted 'normally', driving everyone away and avoiding both Porrim and Cronus' attempts to chat with him- his outburst a few days ago must have still stung them he guessed but he didn't care. He had other things to focus on, other things mattered more than his non-existent love life and he was *just fine with it*. And like he said, Cronus was definitely *not* his type.

When it was lunch, Kankri secluded himself somewhere on the campus that not many people knew about. It was an old classroom, he didn't know what class it used to teach but it was a medium sized room that was almost bare of anything that would clue in to what class used to use it. Kankri didn't need to know but it was a passing curiosity. It was dusty but it didn't really phase Kankri, he was able to eat lunch surrounded by corpses, a little dust wouldn't phase him.

As Kankri ate in his solitude, sitting directly on a table- he covered the dusty table with a picnic blanket for some decorum of hygiene- while awaiting the inevitable to happen.

*Creak*

Kankri kept his face blank as the door opened then closed, he didn't bother looking at the staring Kurloz and just continued his lunch in preferred silence.

He wasn't phased as Kurloz took loud steps towards him, face pinched and eyes narrowed. The leader of the most mysterious gang almost rolled his eyes at him but merely swallowed his sandwich and finally turned to look at the Prince of the Church. "For your sake I hope that no one followed you, Prince." Those narrowed purple eyes widened before he hesitantly nodded, "Good, that makes things easier."

Kankri catcalled the rest of his lunch and crossed his legs at the edge of the table, propping his elbow on his knees and placed his chin on his palm, he gave Kurloz a satirical smile, "Well? What does the Prince of the Church want?"

"So you are the Second Crimson of the Shackled Sufferers." Came Kurloz's quiet but deep voice. Kurloz was mostly a quiet guy, he didn't talk much if at all, but he did talk. Sometimes. He usually preferred actions over words and for Meulin's sake he learned sign language, just for her. He uses sign language more than his own voice, and it showed with how raspy it is from disuse. Still, it didn't bother the both of them.

Kankri hummed, "Indeed, and you are the Prince of the Mirthful Church." He replied sardonically, enjoying the spark of surprise the other had, "Is there a point in this exchange? Class starts in quite a bit." Ten minutes to be exact, and he had a reputation and facade to uphold of course.

Kurloz shook his head, "I almost couldn't believe it, but then, I stopped to think... You are truly cunning and devious Kankri Vantas." Kurloz complimented.

The red-eyed teen snorted, "Please, leave your compliments for my sister. She's your *girlfriend* after all." He told him with a slight sneer, he never did really approve of Meulin dating Kurloz after finding out that Kurloz was part of the Church. "And stop staring at me while we're here, don't want to give anyone ideas I'd rather not have them think about. It's hard enough to



act *insufferable* without anyone else knowing." He scoffed, hopping off the table and captchaloging the picnic blanket.

Kurloz didn't say anything, staying silent as Kankri walked his way, the young leader stopping right besides him. "Actually, now that the opportunity has presented itself." Kankri says, breaking the silence and suddenly he *moved*.

The eldest Makara withheld his gasp as suddenly Kankri -*Kankri the **insufferable**, the same Kankri that preached **peace**, **pacifist little Kankri***- was *pinning* him against the nearest table, knee between his legs, hand clutching the collar of his skeleton hoodie and a *gun* held firmly underneath his chin- *how the-*

Kankri smiled sweetly at the taller male, "I wish I could've done this sooner, but I had to act as the insufferable Kankri that you usually know me." He said softly, Kurloz's eyes widened as his eyes glowed an ominous red, a ***fire*** burning brightly in them that had his breath hitching, "Now that you know, I can say this as Meulin's brother and as the leader of the Shackled Sufferers... *Hurt her...*" He trailed off, his sweet smile changing into a wicked one as his gun *clicked*, "*And you **pay** with your **blood** Makara.*" And just like that, the gun was gone, Kankri was walking away and Kurloz was staring after him with wide eyes.

"Ta."

The door creaked open and closed as the eldest Makara was left alone in the abandoned classroom. Kurloz calmed his breath but felt his heart hammering in his chest as he stared at the door Kankri left through. Something *primal* in him -*he was growling? When did that start-* was starting to bloom and Kurloz recognized it for all it was worth.

Oh.

*Damn.*

---

"Woah... motherfucking *bitchtits* yo..." Gamzee breathed as he looked around.

Finally school had ended and Gamzee was able to rebuff all of his friends from hanging out, lying through his teeth as he excused himself with the help of Kurloz. He fibbed that he and Kurloz had to get home, that his father wanted him to heal in peace and in the safety of their home.

Nepeta had, reluctantly, lead him to the Nest- er, to the Davis Base and *damn* was it *cool*.

The youngest Makara glanced around before finally catching sight of the eldest Davis and grinned brightly, "Yo my motherfucker!" He greeted with cheer, "Bitching base you have Qrow, motherfucking *nice*."

Qrow stared at him then turned to Nepeta, "Is he normally like this? What happened to the murderous bloodthirsty asshole I went up against?" She just snorted.

"Mostly, or, he usually acts like that in public. How am I suppose to know how he acts when he isn't the fucking Bard?" She huffed in reply, crossing her arms as she lounged on the recliner she personally had claimed during her time at their base.

Gamzee shrugged, "I like fighting and being chill, when I fight I fight, when I chill I chill." He answered them both as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. It probably wasn't but Gamzee had no other answer for them.

"Great, so our newest member acts high even though he's not and can turn into a bloodthirsty asshole when the time is right. Just what we needed." Hal muttered, observing their 'newest' member. Kankri had assigned Gamzee to their team so newest member was a fairly accurate label.

Qrow bristled protectively as suddenly Gamzee was in front of Hal, looking awed, "Woah there little motherfucker, you're all like, *metal* and stuff. Partly but woah dude." Gamzee grunted and stumbled back as Qrow pulled him away from Hal.

He blinked as Qrow glared at him from behind his orange shades, "Stay away from my little brother." Gamzee blinked again then grinned, it was a touch bit feral as he replied.

"Make me."

As they both began to bicker, Hal sighed and motioned for Nepeta to break it up between them.

"This is going to be a long week."

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## Chapter End Notes

Ohohohoho~!

Things are about to get interesting!

I can fairly be sure that either next chapter or the chapter after that, shit will about to hit the fan the hardest it can because stuff is about to happen! I can't wait!

Hope you enjoyed guys! Also, thoughts about pairings in this story? I have a few implied stuff but there's nothing concrete just yet. I'm not really focusing on it this story but there will be opportunities for it and some of those opportunities may guarantee some DRAMA in this. (coughcough -kankrikurlozmeulindrama- coughcough) But at any rate, let me know on what you think!



TA: fuck

TA: you

TA: you biitch

RA: I am certainly amused by your feelings for me Sollux.

RA: I can practically feel the contempt from here.

RA: It's impressive.

TG: u r \*\*13 yrs old\*\*

TG: were the \*fuck\* did u learn this shit

RA: I taught my own self a lot of things.

RA: Sure I had some outside help but I have certain advantages that both of you do not.

RA: As for what those advantages are, you will have to find out on your own.

TA: the utter contempt ii feel riight now i2 iinde2criibable

RA: Ah, if only things were a little different.

RA: I could have definitely scored something pitch.

TG: tf does that mean

RA: Irrelevance.

RA: Anyway, once again, congratulations for stripping the first layer.

RA: Now for the others.

TG: uuuugughgughuuguguuuuuuuuuuuuughh

TG: kill me now pls

TA: fuck you fuck you fuck you fuck you

RA: Woah there you two.

RA: You didn't even let me finish.

RA: In the recent triumph the both of you experienced.

RA: I've decided to give you two a prize.

TG: wut

TA: a priize.

RA: Yes, a prize.

--roboticAutomaton [RA] send file ScriptCL2062.jpeg--

TG: ...

TA: ...

TG: .....

TG: hopy shitsu :OoOO

TA: what the fuck

RA: 🙃

RA: You're welcome.

TG: o

TG: m

TG: fuck :oooo

TA: \*\*what the fuck i2 thiis\*\*

RA: That should help you in the long run, maybe.

RA: It'll certainly give you an edge.

RA: As much as I like seeing you both attempt and fail, I really do enjoy a challenge.

TA: \*\*\*WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS\*\*\*

TG: its

TG: beuatiful

RA: I take it you both enjoy your prize.

TG: tes

TG: \*yes

TG: \*beautiful

TA: \*ii am goiing to kiick your fucking a22 iif you dont tell me what the fuck thii2 ii2 hal\*

RA: Aw, you do.

RA: At any rate, I look forward to your next attack on my second layer.

RA: It'll be fun, also Sollux, can you not use your optic orbs to read? It is clearly a type of coding language that is unheard of by your standards. It's both complicated yet so simple, to me that is, I don't know about you two but you can certainly try it out. Like I said, it'll give you two a certain edge that will make this a bit more fun.

RA: ☹

--roboticAutomaton [RA] ceased pestering twinArmageddons [TA]--

--roboticAutomaton [RA] ceased pestering tipsyGnostalgic [TG]--

TA: he'2 dead

TA: ii 2wear to god

TA: hal davii2 ii2 dead fuckiing meat

TG: ssshhhhuhhhhsshhh

TG: i need to study this shit

TG: look at it sol

TG: its so

TG: ajfnoferifedo :DDD

TA: i 2tand corrected

TA: before ii kiill hiim, ii wiill force every 2iingle liittle triick he know2 and get hiim to teach me \*\*\*EVERYTHIING\*\*\*

TG: not if i bag him first captor

TA: fuck off lalonde

TA: he'2 miine ii knew hiim fiir2t

--twinArmageddons [TA] ceased pestering tipsyGnostalgic [TG]--

---

Hal grinned, leaning back in self-smug-satisfaction.

It was about time both Sollux and Roxy got through his first layer.

He'd been tempted to give them a pity gift- which was what his prize was supposed to be but in the end, they both *finally* got through his first layer of defense.

So the pity gift turned into a prize, not that they knew that of course, if they did they'd be *super* pissed. But hey, they seemed to like it very much.

Said gift was a coding language, from the year 2062. Over the years, there had been plenty of other aspiring programmers that had created plenty of coding languages and Hal remembered *everything* about those code languages. From the perspective of Roxy and Sollux, he had essentially 'created' an entirely brand new coding language.

Ah, the perks of alternative and future knowledge.

His chair tilted slightly as Qrow leaned against it, peering at him from above, "What's got you so smug?" He asked, yawning slightly, having just woke up given the state of his hair and dress. "Is it Sollux and Roxy again?" He stated more than asked, rubbing his eyes, wincing as he unintentionally used his broken wrist which was held in a small cast. He grunted in annoyance, wishing to just be able to take it off sooner rather than later.

"Yep. They finally managed to break one of my defenses." Hal replied with a small tone of pride in his voice, Qrow wanted to shake his head, unable to comprehend why Hal would be proud of them for breaking into his defenses but hey, it was between the three hackers and didn't really involve him whatsoever.

The crow-winged flier just yawned again and nodded indulgently at his little brother's words, "Alright, good for them." He praised, pushing down the smile at the small beam that Hal had on his face. It was there for a brief moment before Hal managed to smooth his face from emotion.

"You'll be going out today." It's more of a statement than a question since Hal knew that Qrow was just *dying* to escape their home, to get outside and fly and so much more.



The blond just nodded, yawning once more as he headed towards the kitchen. "Yeah, finally managed to get Kankri to agree to let me out of this damned cage." He said, growing louder as he went into the kitchen.

"This cage is our home."

"I know! But it's more of a cage now that we've got that chucklefuck with us! I've been stuck here for too long, I need to get out dammit!"

Hal shrugged, he had a bit of a point. Ever since Gamzee had been accepted into the Shackled Sufferers, things were... a lot more interesting with how Gamzee kept trying to coerce a fight, verbal or otherwise, out of Qrow. It was driving him crazy. Not to mention Hal and Nepeta who were tasked to break up the fights between the two.

It's been a day or so since Gamzee had invaded their personal home, curse Kankri and his manipulative ways but unfortunately it really was the better alternative. Hal shuddered to think on what would have happened if Qrow had lost, they would have had to move out of their home and into whatever place that the Grand Highblood would have thought appropriate for them.

Qrow came out of the kitchen, holding a bottle of apple juice and microwaved leftover takeout that Nepeta bought from yesterday. It was Thai food this time, yum. "You already ate?" He asked as he went over to the couch, putting the apple juice on the table while twirling his spoon before digging into the newly microwaved leftover Thai food.

Hal nodded, Qrow squinted at him as he paused from his eating, trying to indicate if he was lying or not. He wasn't and the older Davis nodded in approval, good, just because he was an android, cyborg whatever, Hal still needed to eat, not as much as a normal human would but it was still a required thing to do and Hal disliked that fact most of the time.

A waste of time he would say, but there would be some perks to having an actual appetite, Hal enjoyed some of the treats that Qrow and or Nepeta would bring back like ice cream and such. Who didn't like ice cream? At any rate, Hal needed to eat and Qrow made sure of that. He was a good big brother.

After his breakfast he went to shower and change, though before he could leave, Hal was adamant in changing the bandages he had on his still healing body, specifically the bandages on his neck, Gamzee had attempted to attack Qrow with his own sword and managed to inflict some damage on his neck, he was lucky that nothing was permanently damaged like his wind pipe or voice box.

Qrow put on his hoodie, pulling the hood up to at least hide the bandages for now, that and the stitches he had to get on his forehead, which would hopefully be taken out soon since the thread itched a bit on his head. He was fine though. He didn't need anything much, plus he had important stuff to do today, he had to meet their newest sibling Chesire.

They decided to move it to today since he had nothing else to do and wanted a reason to get out, aside from breaking the cabin fever that was quickly setting into Qrow. Nepeta couldn't come today, having to focus on her civilian life for a while, Gamzee couldn't for the same reason but that was a relief, a day without the youngest Makara was considered a very good day in his opinion.

"Got everything?" Hal asked as Qrow prepared to leave, nodding back when Qrow gave him a nod of confirmation. Good, didn't want him to be unprepared if anything happened while he was out. They were kind of paranoid like that.

Qrow was still prohibited from flying for the meanwhile, which just made him grumpy but at least he was able to leave their place temporarily. At any rate, he was actually looking forward to see Chesire again, no matter how weird they had been earlier when they first met but having a new sibling was kind of exciting. Plus, he and Hal still had questions as to what they were referring to and if she knew even a tiny *inkling* over what happened to them and how they got into this universe in the first place.

Qrow stretched, hissing slightly at the strain of his wounds but continued on, "Well, I'm off." He said, opening the main entrance of their home, already missing the feeling of flying through his preferred entrance and exit the modified giant window that opened and closed on command for him.

"Be careful out there bro." Hal bade him, even though he would essentially be there with him through Qrow's orange shades.

The avian-winged teen grunted as he closed the door and went out, finally breathing fresh air and started walking towards the city and towards the meeting place that he and Chesire decided on.

He'd be surprised at what was waiting for him there.

---

--uraniumUmbra [UU] is pestering roboticAutomaton [RA]--

UU: i am so sorry hal

UU: forgive me

RA: What?

RA: Callie what's going on?

--uraniumUmbar [UU] ceased pestering roboticAutomaton [RA]--

RA: Callie?

--sYSt3MErr0r404--

--wArniNG WaRNIng data CoR-Corrupt1on-

-meMory ErrOr-

-sYStem r3B00t InIt14tInG-

-SysTEM rep41r 1NiTiaTiNg-

\_ . . . \_

\_ . . . \_

\_ . . . \_

-Reboot semi-successful-

-Resuming primary objective-

-Resuming secondary objective -ERROR- Secondary object partially locked-

-Tertiary objective locked-

-Resuming primary functions-

Hal blinked, shaking his head. "Ow... Wait, what was I... Oh right, watch Grow... And talk to Psi." He mumbled, looking over to the screen that showed his brother's sight and opening a new screen to pester Dexter. Still, he had the urge to do a system check up, just in case. He finds nothing wrong.

Absolutely nothing.

---

"Did you really think you could do that young lady?"

"..."

"I will let this slide *just* for once. If only to save time, we do not have much of it after all and a punishment now would only delay it, something that we can't have..."

"..."

"Go to your room and await further instructions."

"...Yes sir..."

---

Kankri hummed lightly as he settled down on a library chair. For once, he wasn't at the school's library. He was in his own library, or at least, his house's personal library. It was a good place to sit back, relax and enjoy a good book.

Today was one of the days that he didn't have anything that important to do, a day where he could relax and not put up with anything, not with 'Kankri the Insufferable Social Justice Warrior Guy', not with 'Second Crimson leader of the Shackled Sufferers', just... Kankri, the one who loves to read and enjoy life...

Maybe later he'll go to the shooting alley, it's been a while since he's used his pistols, maybe he should go on another personal mission and get

someone killed or something. This was nice though, just staying on his chair, reading a nice book.

*Ping*

And just as he was enjoying himself too. Kankri sighed and put aside his book to get his phone out. He rose a brow at the one who was pestering him.

--psionSteersman [PS] is pestering shackledCrimson [SC]--

PS: weve got a problem

SC: I was afraid of this, I was getting **\*\*too\*\*** comfy on this chair.

SC: Speak.

PS: new Information has come up

PS: the strIlonde famIly has been submIIted to everyones board

PS: someones offerIIng bIIg money to off the four adults

PS: bonus cash for the kIIDs

Kankri sat up straighter, a serious look on his face as he stared at the words on his screen, he gets to his feet and stalks out of the house. Karkat was out of the house so all he needed to do was send off a message to him in Pesterchum that he was out, using his alternate account.

SC: I'm on my way, gather the others except for the nest.

SC: We aren't going to involve them in this just yet.

He needed to confirm this, quickly, and plan everything out.

---

"What the fuck, happened to you." Qrow asked as he leaned against the wall, hands in his hoodie's pocket while staring *down* at the being that his newest sibling became.

Cheshire smiled at him, it was disturbing to see that on their face, it was too unnaturally wide- he could get why Cheshire picked their name, as if things

before didn't, with the whole disappearing and purpleness and vagueness and... being a goddamn cat person who now a literal *cat* person. "I, actually don't remember that much. All I remember is trying to avoid Rose and waking up as a cat, absolutely fabulous isn't it?" They purred, walking over to him with a pleased purr. "Oh! And watch this!" They exclaimed.

"Watch wh... right, part eldritch princess with tentacles male cat." Qrow deadpanned, rubbing his eyes underneath his shades as Chesire showed off the two tentacles that appeared at her side, like his own wings, they looked ethereal and not-natural, *especially* on a cat. "This, this is just getting fucking ridiculous."

Chesire snorted though they still kept their painfully wide smile, only it wasn't painful for them. "Oh, *now* you think so? Was it not ridiculous when I appeared while you were flying brother?"

Qrow resisted the urge to roll his eyes and sighed, "Whatever. Let's get you back to Hal and we can make you something so you can stay in touch, got that Hal?"

RA: Yep, I'm already making a collar for our sibling.

RA: And that was as weird as to type that as to reading it.

"Yeah. Come on Chesire."

"Lift me."

"What."

"It'll be easier for me to travel if you lift me."

"I am *not*-"

"Just shut up and carry me Qrow. Or at the least just let me ride your shoulder."

Qrow huffed, groaning before giving up, "Fine! Let's just go, I want to get something to eat before we go to Hal." Chesire smirked smugly as the blond knelt on one knee. The strange-colored cat jumped on his knee before

climbing on his shoulder. "Watch the claws." Qrow told her as he carefully stood up, trying to get used to the added weight on his shoulder. "Careful, and stay on that shoulder, the other one still fucking hurts if you put pressure on it and careful with my neck."

"Stop complaining and walk." Chesire purred, using their tail to wrap around Qrow's neck like an anchor. "How *did* you get so injured brother?"

"That's a long story that I'll tell later. Right now, let's get the fuck out of this alley."

---

"You shouldn't have stayed up last night if you feel this crappy in the morning Rox. Actually why did you come out of your room this morning? You could've slept in." Dirk deadpanned at her as they walked down the street, Rose and Jane accompanying them as they were heading towards the meeting place that John had set up, Karkat and Jake were waiting for them.

Roxy groaned, rubbing her eyes and the eyebags underneath, "I knooow but, Frigglish was gone today and I did *not* want to miss this meeting." She pointed out, giving a yawn and another stretch.

Her best friend shook her head, "You know Roxy, Dirk and the others and I could have just informed you on what transpired later on right?" Jane questioned her, looking at her worriedly, frowning in concern as her pink-eyed friend waved it off.

"It's fine, I'm goood."

Rose sighed, pinching the bridge of her nose, "You're not *good* sister, but at least the place we're meeting with John has coffee so that'll be good for you. And pray tell what were you doing up again last night? Was it the Hal thing again?" She jolted at the sharp grin that appeared on Roxy's face, usually it was a grumpy frown or a frustrated noise that appeared or was heard from her, instead, Roxy was grinning widely and laughing.

Dirk eyed her warily, in her sleep-deprived state who knows what she was going to do or what was going through her mind. "Uh, Roxy?" He

interrupted before the blond hacker could go fully maniacal complete with laughter and lightning in the background.

"Oh, sorry but yes! It was *en-dee-dy* a Hal thing! Only this time, Sollux and I managed to get it!" Roxy cheered, making the rest stop in shock, "We got through the first layer! Booyeah! Who's great? *I am!*" She sang smugly, doing a little jig only to stop because she was tired and doing a dance would just make her expend more energy than necessary.

Dirk's eyes gleamed in interest behind his shades, "You *did it*? What'd you find?" He asked quickly, always wanting to know what Roxy could have found whenever it came to Hal or Qrow or really, the both of them.

"Yes, yes! What did you find Roxy?" Jane asked eagerly, this might be a breakthrough in their unfortunately, very halted and blocked investigation regarding the mysterious Hal and Qrow Davis case!

Even Rose was looking very interested, Roxy grinned at them and was about to answer when something caught her eye. "Hey wait, isn't that Qrow right there?... And is that *Frigglish*?" She questioned, looking off into the distance behind them. Instantly at her words, they turned and saw what she was seeing; one Qrow Davis walking to the side of the street, carrying take out and eating a taco with one uniquely-colored cat on one of his shoulders.

"Oh my god it is!"

---

It was a good walk so far, fresh city air, an annoying companion on his shoulder, good Chinese take out and eating a nice good taco.

Why did good things come to an end? Qrow thought instantly when he was stopped in his place at the sound of, "Hey Qrow!" By a very familiar voice-which was Roxy's.

RA: Don't even think about it Qrow.

RA: You are not running, not anymore, not when you're like this. Turn around slowly and deal with this in a civil manner.

RA: Don't worry, it's just the four of them, no one else is in the area.



He held in a groan and slowly turned to them, as much as he wanted to run, running was currently not what he was suppose to do. And he had a talk with Hal about what to do the next time they just happen to run across each other. "Hey." He deadpanned at them. At least Hal was right and that there were only four of them, and no one else. He doesn't think he could deal with anyone else at the moment.

Dirk paused, instantly zeroing on the bandages that were visible on the blond, "What the fuck happened to you? Who did this to you? Are you okay?" He asks before he could stop myself, instinctively going into 'protective brother' mode, he tried to get a hold on Da-Qrow grimaced at him and dodged his hand.

"Nothing, just had an accident."

Just an accident Dirk's *ass*.

Qrow mentally groaned as he kept a neutral face while facing the four teens who were looking at him in concern, on his shoulder, Chesire kept quiet, observing the whole situation with a keen eye.

This was going to be a long day.

---

## Chapter End Notes

WHOOOOOOOOOOOO it's really been a long day yeah.  
Sorry for the late update guys, this chapter had me stumped, I didn't know where to go so I ended up settled for this.

Happy late Christmas and an early Merry New Year guys!

See you in 2019~

## Hidden Tension (2)

### Chapter Notes

Maybe I should do something about the way I write.  
My writing schedule is really fucked but at any rate, have a chapter guys!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

### **BANG**

"Who the hell put up the hit?!"

Kankri demanded after slamming his hands on the table, growling in frustration as he looked at the demand. Around him, his most trusted colleagues didn't even flinch in his anger, not even with the threat of his own Power. Kankri was dressed almost completely in his Crimson clothing, minus the mysterious black mask as well as the power Salamancer had on his identity.

Said Salamancer was unfortunately not with them, she was still at work, acting as a chaperone and close servant to the elder Lalonde sister. However, she would be back soon and she would be appalled at what they had found out right now.

Someone had truly put up a hit on the Strilonde family, a family he was adamant on keeping off limits. For the sake of the two other blonds within his ranks who, despite not wanting anything with the family itself, did not want to see its demise. Qrow and Hal were good, but he doubts that they would truly raise a harmful hand against the Striders or Lalondes.

Qrow's reaction to the elder Striders appearing so suddenly was a good example- even with Qrow's insistence that he was not Dave Strider, at least 'not anymore' as Nepeta would eloquently and vaguely say, Qrow could not go against the Striders and expect to be totally victorious as usual.

At any rate though, there was a *gigantic* reward if someone killed off the two families. The four adults *alone* could sustain a person for their entire lifetime, add in the three kids bonus rewards? Dream motherfucking come true, it literally said 'Whatever favor/dream/request/plea/etc one would wish'.

What ticked Kankri off so much at the moment, was that the one who submitted the request was fucking *anonymous*. **No one** knew who submitted the request, who ordered the hit and plastered it on *every* wall of *every* gang within the city. Kankri had made *damn sure* that that would be impossible! Even for The Felt! THE. **MOTHERFUCKING. FELT.**

And yet.

Here the order was, a printed out copy crushed in his hands. It was too late to take the order down, not with it plastered on every goddamn wall of all the crime syndicates. All of them. And the order was authentic, his powers told so. And even without it, there was just something so *compelling* with about the order and request. Something wrong.

And there was time limit on it, and a specific time for the murders as well.

They didn't have enough time to prepare in Kankri's personal opinion but *by fuck* is he going to stand around doing nothing in the time they had.

Kankri's scowl darkened, "Contact *everyone* in our group. Everyone loyal and free. Freeze the board and stop the missions. We are going to *prepare dammit*. Get the Church in on this, I'll deal with Highblood. And Psiioniic, *find out who the hell put up that hit!*" He snarled, tugging on his face mask. Kankri was gone, and in his place, the cunning and *furious* Crimson stood. Burning with a rage as red and bright as his own unnatural blood.

The others knelt, "Yes *Crimson*." They chorused, Psiinoiic immediately jumping unto the computer to do his part, Tetrarch stalking out of the room to bark orders as his part while Xefros followed after him.

Crimson narrowed his eyes and took in a calming deep breath.

Time to contact his 'second in command', he scoffed, as if. He has no idea what Highblood was on when he proposed the idea but if the fucker was going to be part of their group, he was going to use him and his appalling subjuglators.

---

Qrow felt like throttling someone.

He didn't know who exactly, but the urge to thrash and throttle someone was beginning to grow. Maybe it was Dirk? Nah, too skinny, Roxy was also off the table along with Jane and Rose, those three weren't really at fault even though they somehow spotted him and *coincidentally* bumped into him.

Cheshire? Maybe, the flighty prick was staying silent aside from the normal-ish meows that came out of their muzzle, alright maybe not because they didn't really had a choice. To the eyes of the others, Cheshire was just a weird but normal-ish cat, who couldn't talk, and didn't have tentacles hidden beneath their fur and skin that reminded Qrow of his own wings which was hidden beneath his skin and shown in the form of admittedly cool-looking tattoos.

Hal? A strong maybe, but still up for debate, Hal couldn't really do much other than keep an eye on him. And they were in the less technological side of the street, a quick check would reveal that the cameras angles couldn't have possibly seen Jane, Rose, Roxy and Dirk coming yet until they came into frame. So he was safe, for now. Again.

But that left no one for Qrow to throttle, no one nearby at least. There was Gamzee, Gamzee he could throttle, the sick fuck would probably even enjoy it and even retaliate, unfortunately he was no nearby.

Dammit, the world was out to get him. Them, he and Hal- but mostly him. He just swore it.

"Are you sure you are well Qrow? I am spotting quite the amount of bandages and gauze on you on a third glance." Rose murmured loud enough

for the other to hear, eyeing him up and down for the third time and then for a fourth.

Qrow refused to sigh, keeping a neutral facade, "Like I said Lalonde, I'm fine." He replied for the eighth time, the first two times were aimed at her sister, another two were aimed towards her and the rest were aimed at Dirk. "I got all patched up better than a beloved fucking tattered doll of some old nana, patching my ribs and tears to hand me down to her grandchildren and shit." He rambled slightly, silencing at the amused flick of the tail that Chesire sent him from Roxy's arms.

She wasn't the only one amused, the Strilonde part of the group was just as amused and the one Crocker was left slightly confused but relieved at the reassurance that he was alright. She had been very concerned about his injuries but didn't really voice it since Roxy, Rose and Dirk had already that covered.

"Alright, if you say so." Dirk said with a small smile, frowning when Qrow looked away from him in the most subtle way possible- and yet he had caught it, he would always catch it. He was his brother after all, no matter what Qrow would insist. But if he voiced it, Qrow would run away again and he definitely didn't want that. Dirk doesn't think he can stand seeing him run away from him again.

Roxy cleared her throat as obviously as she could, grinning as if nothing was wrong, "Sooo..." She drawled out, slinking over to Qrow's side, "What'cha doin'? I mean, I can see the food and stuff but what were you doing with our cat Frigglish?" She asked, wiggling Chesire in her arms slightly. That was a good question, what *was* Qrow doing with the Lalonde cat?

Qrow snorted, recognizing the name quite well even *before* he had read Rosaline's book series, or rather *Rose's* book series. He resisted the urge to send Chesire an amused look, knowing quite well they had gotten it from his snort alone. "Didn't know they were your cat, saw it, felt pity and decided to try and take it home or something." He said with an obvious tone.

Roxy blinked, "Oh." She hadn't really expected that but shrugged, "That's nice but Frigglish is a Lalonde-owned cat now! Hmm, we really need to get you a collar though." She mused, looking down to Chesire with a contemplative look. They hadn't gotten one yet, it kept slipping their mind since they were all kind of busy ever since they had gotten Chesire, not enough to forget to feed him but to continuously forget to buy him one.

Qrow frowned, Hal was already planning on making Chesire their own computerized collar just for them since they didn't have one. "Yo, I could hook you up with a collar if you want." He blurted out, shit, why did he say that- fuck it, he's going with it. "My bro's pretty good at making stuff, he even made Nep a pair of kick-ass gloves, a collar would be easy as fuck. Guy could probably make anything, and hey, you can have it custom made. All stylized and shit."

RA: I'm flattered by your words bro.

RA: But I am curious as to what you're doing.

TF: isn't it obvious

RA: Yes but still.

TF: shut up it just came out now sh i need to focus

Qrow broke away his mental connection with his iShades to focus on Roxy's shock and thoughtful face. She isn't the only one, though Qrow could spy the slight jealousy on Dirk's face, which was weird, where was the Strider facade? Was he not a Strider? And why the hell was he jealous?

Hal on the other hand, couldn't help but feel smug by Dirk's jealousy. Knowing full well on why he was jealous. He's ceaselessly amused by this Dirk's actions and feelings about it all. Satisfied even. It's petty, he knows that but he doesn't give a damn. Hal has something that's unique to him, and that was *his* brother.

His.

Not Dirk's.

"Tempting offer, but what would it cost?" Rose inquired as she looked between her sister and Qrow. Trying to see the underlying motive that Qrow had, why offer something of benefit to the people that had caused him trouble before? "I presume this was not out of the goodness of your heart."

Qrow chuckles at the dryness of her words along with the deadpanned look, classic Rose, he almost misses her. Scratch that. He does miss her, and John, and Jade... But that wasn't anything new. He was fine, he had Hal, Nepeta and all the other assholes in his life. It would be safer for the three of them if he just stayed away.

"Not really, just want some easy cash." That wasn't much of a lie, he didn't really need money, his last reward over defeating the damned clown prick was enough to last a while, not to mention the other money they had saved up in the hidden bank accounts Hal had set up for them both.

That reminded them, just what the hell did Qrow do for a living? It said on Qrow's profile that he was emancipated, somehow. That, and the blond had managed to test for his GED, which was really impressive but that did give them more questions and such.

The most important and repeating one was; What the *fuck* was going on?

Dirk inhaled slightly and tried to look casual, "You tight on cash or something?" If it really was just him and his 'little brother' then what was Qrow doing to earn money? Did it... Did it have anything to do with the bandages that covered him? He couldn't ask outright, not if he wanted a true answer anyway.

Qrow shook his head, "Nah, we're alright but some extra dough wouldn't be bad now would it?" He replied smoothly with a deadpanned face. "Anyway, deal or no deal?"

Roxy frowned, sharing a glance with her sister and the others. Would it be worth it?

...

---

"Dammit where the fuck are they?!" Karkat growled as he looked around the place they were gathered at.

They were at a small cafe, they had agreed the day prior to physically meet up and discuss a few things. Karkat had shown up first, John second, Jake third and finally Jade and here they were, awaiting the four final others that would show up.

However it seemed that they were late.

"Karkat! Sshh! Be quiet and sit down!" Jade told him sternly, "Maybe something happened and they are being delayed!" She pointed out with a stern frown.

John nodded in agreement, even though he was quite concerned himself. "Yeah! Maybe they're being delayed somehow! Look, I'll even message Jane and ask just please don't flip your shit Karkat!" He pleaded.

Karkat grumbled but reluctantly sat down once more, sipping at the drink he had ordered which was a cherry smoothie. "Fine, but if they don't fucking show up in the next half-hour or some the fuck thing, I will, as you say quote 'flip my shit' unquote." He told them.

Jake muffles a chortle, looking away when Karkat glared at him for his chortle. "Sorry..." He mumbled, hiding his small grin.

Karkat sighed in frustration, *'I'm surrounded by buck-toothed dorks.'* He thought to himself as he sulked, sipping at the cherry smoothie and ordering another one once he had finished.

Jade rolled her eyes but coughed, "Fiiine, if you're so grumpy and impatient... Let us talk then, we can catch them up when they finally come."

Karkat perked and begrudgingly nodded, that was better than waiting in semi-awkward silence and sulking to himself.

Both John and Jake shared a look and nodded in agreement.



Karkat straightened and began to talk.

---

"Are you in or not Highblood?" Crimson asked, arms crossed and face carefully void of emotion, but he couldn't hide the small tone of anger in his voice. Unnoticeable by others, but Highblood was able to find it and found amusement from it, and intrigue.

Kieran Makara hadn't really expected Kankri Vantas to appear in his office room, not during his 'work' and certainly not during the actual time of day- the sun was still high in the sky! Didn't Crimson work better at night?

The Makara patriarch had two jobs, as was expected from almost every head crime syndicate that existed, excluding Kankri Vantas as he was still within school but that still somewhat counted, they all had their civilian guises after all. Their alter egos for the public, kept hidden from their enemies and even allies, it was 'taboo' to reveal their civilian identity but also oh so tempting.

Kieran Makara was the head of a simple construction company, something discreet but also fitting his build easily. Most of his subjugglators were his employees and were quite normal and decent people outside of their face paint and dangerous clownish weaponry. Their main building was secure, one of the most secured buildings that belonged to the Church, it would be hard to sneak past the dedicated guards and sophisticated security.

So when he entered his office, he had definitely not expected the Second Crimson of the Shackled Sufferers to be sitting on his desk all business like, reminding him all too well of his predecessor, reminding him all too well of a certain man still in a coma, the very same man that *trained his son* to be like him- well, he guesses he shouldn't be as surprised as he should, any spawn of the First Crimson would be a spawn to keep an eye on.

He clearly hadn't kept a closer eye enough.

Kieran smirked, quickly getting over his shock to saunter his way to his desk, the same desk Crimson was *still* sitting on. The little fucker had the *gall* to do that, a feral grin appeared on his face as soon as he sat down

and looked at Crimson who had simply shifted to face him, still comfortably perched on his table.

"You got balls kid, I'll give you motherfucking that." He purred, leaning back on his chair, no longer in the guise of Kieran Makara but in his primal identity as *Highblood*. "What's in it for motherfucking us Second Crimson?"

Crimson's deliciously red eyes narrowed dangerously, Highblood has to hold back the pleased growl at the familiar sight- oh how he missed the First Crimson, but at least his successor was just as fun to deal with. Maybe he should arrange something between his son and Second Crimson, he'd heard his son's raves and seen the new interest sparking in his eyes like he, himself had back when he was younger and Kelvin had been the one to bring the Shackled Sufferers into existence with outstanding success.

He had never approved of the softer first child of the Huntress, Meulin was a nice daughter and a nice person yes, and he had no qualms against her disability- no, what he disapproved of was how *soft* she was compared to them, she would surely crack should she trigger Kurloz's primal side during their courting. She didn't spark Kurloz's eyes like Kankri had, Makaras were truly attracted to *interesting* and *strong* people, Kurloz might be a bit softer than he had wanted- even though he could be just as ruthless during the right and certain circumstances- but he was still a Makara.

The seed of interest had been planted and was quickly growing as Kankri unknowingly aided its growth just by being himself.

Crimson didn't even hesitate, "You get to let loose against any other syndicate that comes after the Striders and Lalondes. Mass chaos and a practical massacre is predicted to be headed towards this event." He informed him neutrally, "And, I will grant one... ***bond favor***." He spat with reluctance.

Immediately Highblood grinned, he had already been tempted with the words of 'mass chaos' and 'massacre', the 'bond favor' was the hook, line and sinker.

Favors among the syndicate was a fragile and very important thing. Just as debt was equally important. *No one* gave bond favors freely within the underworld, they were as good as fucking as goddamn *diamonds* in their line of work.

And Highblood would have one favor from the Second Crimson himself.

"Deal." He said with satisfaction.

Inwardly, Kankri sighed, that was one thing down.

Now to deal with the Davis brothers...

---

-- automaticRecreator [AR] began pestering psionSteersman [PS] --

AR: What's got you hurrying everywhere?

AR: Psiioniiic.

AR: What's going on.

PS: IIm surprIIsed you havent seen II yet

PS: IIIts everywhere IIIn the boards of the syndIIcates

AR: What.

PS: Dont freak out

PS: Were goIIIng to deal wIIth whats goIIIng on

AR: ...

AR: shit

AR: SHIT

PS: avIIator

AR: SHIT WHAT THE FUCK

PS: AVIIATOR

PS: Calm the fuck down

PS: CrIIImson IIIs on thIIIs

PS: IId advIIsE you to not tell AvIIan

PS: Not yet

PS: Hes stIIll recoverIIIng

AR: ...

AR: what are we going to do

PS: Leave IIIt to CrIIImson

PS: Leave IIIt to us AvIIator

PS: We know what were doIIIng

---

Hal breathed in a calming breath.

Shit.

This changed...

*Everything.*

---

"They have started preparing Master. It is as you predicted, you have thought far and true, even the fact that your foolish daughter might have tried something."

". . ."

"Yes, quite. The incoming event shall be very entertaining, I will do my best to provide you such entertainment~ Hoo hoo hoo~"

". . ."

"Do not worry Master, we will find that box but in the meantime, why not enjoy the show?"

Chapter End Notes

I DID IT

Hope you enjoyed the chapter! It's a bit shorter than I would have liked but I needed to get this chapter out. But soon enough, we'll have the BIG EVENT coming soon! Or at least, the first one.

## Hidden Tension (3)

### Chapter Notes

OH. MY. GOOOOD.

I AM SO SORRY EVERYBODY WHO HAS BEEN WAITING FOR THIS FIC FOR A LONG TIME BUT HERE WE ARE!!

I am so sorry everyone, I was just sidetracked and the chapter's been strangling me with it's uncooperative ways! Aaaaahhhhhh.... TnT

Still, I hope you enjoy....

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

---

Qrow almost didn't believe on how his bullshitting had worked.

Well, he suspected it almost didn't and that they were only doing it for his sake but at the moment he didn't care, he could now get Chesire to the base without much problem, make plans with Hal to make their collar and talk to their weird ass sibling in peace.

Though, that was if he could actually survive his encounter with the Strilonde with a side of Crocker.

Chesire on the other hand was pleased at Roxy and Rose's agreement, purring contently before wiggling out of Roxy's grip much to her surprise, the blond let out a yelp as Chesire delicately landed on the floor to go over to Qrow, rubbing their head against Qrow's pant leg. Qrow sent them a deadpanned look, though he covered it up with some amusement. "Well, looks like Frigglish's already looking forward to that collar." He said, almost snorting at their surprised looks at Chesire's actions.

"Looks like it." Roxy mumbled before brightening and sending Qrow a grin, "But yeah! Thanks for the offer for the collar! How much are we

going to pay?”

Qrow tilted his head in thought.

TF: how much are collars

RA: It varies but normally they range from eight to ten bucks I think for a good collar.

“Ten bucks, it’ll be the greatest collar you’ll ever fucking seen.” Qrow replies smoothly.

“Deal! Do you want to take Frigglish now or?”

“Sure, I need to buy some more shit before heading home, might as well buy some cat food for Frigglish before I go. We can meet up tomorrow so I can hand t-him back to you.” Qrow offered as he crouched to let Chesire climb his good shoulder much to the other’s surprise.

Roxy nodded, deciding before anyone else could, “Alrighty! Meet us at the Prospit Breakfast Bar tomorrow around, lunch maybe? If you aren’t too busy?” She asked hopefully, sending her friends a look to say ‘ssh, let me handle this’.

Both Qrow and Chesire saw it but didn’t react to it, “Sure, I shouldn’t be doing anything tomorrow around lunch, I’ll bring Frig back safe and sound.” He said, reaching up to scratch the underside of Chesire’s jaw much to their delight, purring loudly and rubbing their head against Qrow’s cheek. “I should get going, I still got some shit to buy.”

Before he could try and leave though, Dirk spoke up, “Do you need any help with your shopping?” He asked, looking pointedly at his bandages.

Qrow frowned, “No, I’m good.” With that and a firm look that Dirk managed to catch, he turned and left, making sure to make it seem that he was going to the nearest store- which he was, he wasn’t really lying much on getting Chesire some cat food, or at least something Chesire might like at the least.

Dirk really wanted to follow him, to insist his help but he knew Qrow would just reject him and he'd be *below* the step he had started with. "Damn." He muttered irritably and worriedly as his hands clenched as he watched *his* brother leave. How the fuck had he gotten hurt? Just what the fuck was going on with Qrow?

Rose patted his shoulder consolingly, "He'll be fine. With those bandages, he should at least be on pain medication and it doesn't look like he's really straining himself." Oh how horrified would she be had she known that she was very wrong with her assessment. Pain medication didn't really affect Qrow, but at the very least, he was *trying* not to strain himself. Qrow was just lucky he had a very high pain threshold, he could deal with lots of pain and function mostly normally.

"I certainly hope not! Also, what was that? Why did you agree to let Qrow take Frigglish?" Jane asked incredulously as she recalled the ridiculous offer that Qrow gave Roxy.

Roxy sent her a victorious smile, "I let him take Frig because that means he *comes back to us*. Didn't ya hear him? He'll meet us tomorrow! And if we let him take Frigglish from time to time, we'll have like, a solid connection with him!" Besides Dirk, Rose nodded in agreement, eyes twinkling with satisfaction.

Both Dirk and Jane blinked and smiled slightly, well, that was one way to make a connection with their supposedly dead sibling slash friend.

---

TF: well

TF: thats that

TF: let me n ches get some stuff and we'll be heading on home

TF: hal?

TF: you there?

RA: Yes.

RA: Yes I am here.



TF: good

TF: gonna get started on that collar?

RA: Yeah sure.

RA: Just give me the code for an actual collar.

TF: np

TF: cll32r

TF: there

RA: Thanks bro

TF: you doing okay dude

TF: youre being a bit weird

RA: We really need to talk about something when you get home.

RA: The boss is on his way.

TF: what

TF: what the hell does kankri want

TF: i thought today was his day off

TF: relaxation day

RA: Important matters have come up bro, better get here fast.

TF: what about chesire

TF: how the fuck are we going to explain them

RA: We'll think of something.

RA: I believe Kankri wouldn't oppose to a new possible recruit.

TF: are we really going to drag them into this supernatural mafia like bullshit we got into

RA: They are our sibling, it was inevitable since they're associating with us.

TF: point but fucking still

TF: at least give them a choice

TF: something that we weren't able to get in the first place

RA: And you think they'll choose any other choice given to them?

TF: ...

TF: fuck you and your logic

TF: dammit

TF: i'm gonna talk to them right now about it

TF: but we'll be home in a few minutes

RA: Understood.

RA: Just don't keep us waiting Qrow.

RA: This is important.

TF: when hasn't it been important

---

Explaining the fact he was a murdering supernatural hitman to his newly catified sibling was, easier than he thought.

It was the matter of Chesire's decision over whether or not they would join the world he and Hal were in or not.

"And you are not affected by the fact that you are ending the lives of humans?"

Okay, that wasn't really the reply he had been expecting, and it showed when Qrow let out a confused, "Huh?" In response.

Chesire sent him an amused look as they flew in the sky, Qrow holding on to Chesire to prevent them from falling. Unfortunately it seemed that they had lost their ability to fly after turning into a feline. It was a shame but at least they got to keep their tentacles, it would keep things easier for them in the long run. And they haven't even tested their tentacles and their own abilities to their full extent. Another reason why they had wanted to come with Qrow back to their base, it was the perfect place to train themselves and figure things out. They couldn't exactly do that within the Lalonde house even when they were alone within the house itself. Too risky.

Cheshire let out a hum that was combined with a curious purr, “I find it interesting in the fact that when you mention the fact you’ve killed people you are quite blasé and unaffected. Most humans and people find it quite disturbing to take a significant life, whether it’s human or not or rather, *especially* when it’s human.” They pointed out, not sounding accusing, just curious. They didn’t seem to be disturbed about the fact their brother had murdered people out of cold blood or for the sake of money. They were just interested in Qrow’s views on the subject.

Qrow blinked, brows furrowing in thought, he hadn’t really thought about that to be honest. All he thought at the end of each job was, ‘well, that’s done, time to go home or look for a new mission’ and nothing else. He felt nothing for the lives he had taken while he had been in this universe. All the blood he had spilled for the sake of finishing the job as fast as he could and get things done. Just so he could go home to his brother and not worry about their financial situation, which was nonexistent since they technically lived off grid. They didn’t have to pay taxes, they didn’t have to pay for electricity or water, that was all covered and they were practically living the easy life. With the exception of their loyalty to their group.

“Huh. Would you look that. Never really thought about it much but yeah, turns out I don’t really care about anyone else aside from the people I know about, I could care less if the rest of humanity died and I wouldn’t bat a fuckin’ lash.” He mused aloud, landing on a high but abandoned building at the edge of the city in the general direction of their base. He had taken Cheshire there just so they could talk in private, talking in the city’s alleyways wasn’t really secure.

His cat sibling didn’t seem to heartbroken over his general disregard to human life so that was good at least, if anything they seemed even more amused. “Interesting. I wonder if this is a psychological side effect to certain circumstances or purrhaps you’ve always been apathetic to the rest of humanity. You weren’t exactly mourning the fact that the Earth was destroyed during the game.” They point out once more, looking very interested.

The blond rolled his eyes from behind his shades and snorted, “Sure. Why not. Well, maybe I guess. It really seem to hit... Actually no, it did hit but

back then I didn't really either. Neither did you for the matter of fact. Looks like we're both psychotic kiddos in a new weird and slightly fucked up universe."

The subject of killing...

He knows he probably shouldn't be as stoic and calm about the fact he had ended various lives with his own hands and weaponry, that wasn't normal. But then again, he wasn't normal whatsoever. He had been born in a merged combination of ectoplasmic dna-filled paradox slime. He had been raised to know the way of the sword ever since he'd been able to hold one properly. He had been and was still interested in morbid dead things, though not as much as when he had been thirteen. *He was a copy of the original Dave.*

Suffice to say, he didn't seem to care at the fact he was killing people at all.

It was strange to realize that only now but it wasn't a revelation that hit him too hard.

So he was indifferent to spilling blood and taking lives, so what?

Did that make him a psychopath or a sociopath.

He knows there's a difference, he just couldn't remember what difference that was.

He didn't care for other people, people outside his 'circle of perspective', they were all canon fodder in his eyes and he could care less for their lives.

But if something happened to the people he knew? He would feel *something*. More than something actually. It naturally depended on who it was. Around those he knew, he felt normal, or at least a semblance to it. Around strangers...

Yeah the point was got.

"It seems so. Whether it makes us psychopaths or sociopaths is something that interests me, it has been a while since I've brushed with psychology, I

must dust off my books and clean my couch.” Chesire chirped with amusement before shaking their head, “For all seriousness, the question whether or not I would join your organization and world is ridiculous. Of course I would. You are my brother, family is family and I find the fact there’s a fantasy-like underworld that is based on the mafia quite interesting and exciting. I wish to learn more.”

Qrow’s feathers ruffled slightly as he snorted in bemusement, he ignored the slight ache in his wings, he was still recovering after all. “‘Course that’s your main reason you want to join... Seems like you’re sure about it, alright then, though you do know there’s no going back.” He says to his sibling, already getting ready to take flight once more, they had to head back to his base after all.

“Of course. There isn’t any other way I would have it.” Chesire replied smugly, jumping back into Qrow’s arms so they could finally get back home.

Plus, they were looking forward into meeting their siblings’ boss.

Unfortunately, things wouldn’t really go as they thought it would.

---

“There you guys are!” Jade huffed the moment she and the others saw Dirk, Roxy, Rose and Jane approaching their table. Food already on their table since they decided to order, having gotten hungry through their discussion and wait.

“Where the fuck have you guys been?” Karkat demanded as they all shifted to accommodate the additional four people that finally came to their booth. It took a bit for everyone to be comfortably sitting down in their booth.

Dirk grunted, shifting in his seat besides Jake, “Sorry, we were held up.”

“By what?”

“By who.” Rose corrected John as she sat between him and her sister. “We met Qrow on the way here.”

*“What?!”*

Explaining to Jade, John, Jake and Karkat about what happened was easy. Though they were all certainly skeptical about what happened.

“Why the fuck would he want your cat?” Karkat asked incredulously as he glanced between the Lalonde sisters, they both gave an uncaring shrug though they were obviously curious themselves. “Fuck it, at least we have a connection for Qrow I guess.”

Gaining a solid connection with the mysterious Qrow was important, since not only was he a goddamn mystery but he also had a connection to his brother for some reason. Something that Karkat found ridiculous and concerning.

He had joined the others on the ‘What the hell is happening’ train on it’s way to ‘Whatsville’ in the city of ‘Happeningtown’.

“Anyway, what did we miss while we met Qrow?” Dirk asked as he snatched a couple of fries off of Jake’s plate much to his small annoyance, the buck-toothed boy didn’t do anything else but sigh and continue to eat his fries.

Jade was the one to answer him, “Well, we were discussing the possible connection between Kankri, Qrow and Hal. It’s ridiculous, by all means, Kankri shouldn’t really know Qrow or Hal.” She pointed out with a sigh as she leaned against the table. “Karkat’s never seen them around, and Kankri hasn’t mentioned them anywhere or to anyone. Not even to Karkat.”

It kind of hurt to know that for Karkat.

Within their house, it was just him and Kankri, brothers that were living together but near by enough for their other family. Ever since their parents went into a coma, Kankri had been... different and difficult. He doesn’t remember much, he had been too young, but he remember Kankri acting quite differently compared to what he was now.

He smiled more, was more outgoing and was less... stiff.

It was something he noticed as he kept observing his brother for anything that could explain why or what was going on. It just kept giving him more questions.

He noticed that whenever Kankri was around others, and everyone else, he's this weird kind of stiff. Like there was something wrong with him and Karkat couldn't really put his finger on it but, Kankri was so... stiff and quiet around others. But when it came to people looking at him, he went from quiet, to loud. Ranting and lectures would spill from his lips most of the time whenever something, 'displeasing' or 'unpleasant' came to subject.

Dammit, this whole situation was getting out of hand. Or was about to. Karkat could just feel it. He wanted to know what was going on.

John somehow, *somehow*, managed to convince him at the fact that Kankri, Hal, Qrow -whoever those two were, he's never met them face to face yet- was somehow linked to his parent's coma.

Something that was still affecting both him, Kankri, and both Meulin and Nepeta.

Their half sisters.

It was another thing that weirded him out a bit.

Why had they split up?

Even though they lived close by, shouldn't they be living together? Like the family that they were?

Observing his big brother was revealing more and more questions that were frustrating him, there was something underneath his skin that itched every time he thought about it, and no matter how much he scratched at it, he couldn't get it to stop.

---

Kankri opened his eyes, a persistent frown on his face as the glow of his eyes faded.

“You okay there boss?” Hal asked, glancing at him before looking back towards the entrance way where Qrow would go through to get inside. He would be bringing their newest sibling, Chesire. A strange version of Rose that seemed to have merged with both Jasper and now inhabited the body of a cat, somehow. That was something to question later on.

When things weren’t hitting the fan.

“I’m fine.” Kankri answered simply, shaking his head. It was simply his blood sense tingling, nothing too strange, but it seemed that they were tingling because of Karkat. Kankri just knew it. That matter would have to be dealt with after their problem. “The fact that you and Qrow have a new sibling is certainly concerning, but if they’re anything like you then I will either have to decide to worry or not worry about them.” He said dryly, the news of their new sibling was very surprising.

Hal sighed, brushing a hand through his hair. “Yeah, Chesire coming was... really something neither Qrow and I were expecting. Trust us.” He grimaced, both at the subject of the sudden appearance of Chesire and at his new hand. It was doing good but it could be better. His new arm needs to be better. He needs a satisfying arm to work with before he could begin on his legs.

Being bound to a chair was always an annoyance, the chair itself was fine, brilliant even but soon, soon he’d be able to walk around and follow his brother and friends to where they went. He could finally go out on his own without much problem.

“I am. You both are one of my most trusted members despite your short stay within our group.” That was surprising, but before Hal could reply, he tensed and looked over when the entrance window opened, signaling the arrival of his brother, and sibling.

Soon, Hal and Kankri could hear the incoming wing flaps. Any other situation, Hal would have been adamant for Qrow to take the main entrance where everyone else went through, to walk instead of wasting his recovering stamina and straining his back and wings while flying. But unfortunately that would take too long and they needed to talk about this



now. Kankri and Hal had let Qrow stall for a bit, if only because telling Chesire was very important to make sure they knew about the shit they were about to hear.

Qrow arrived not soon long after the sound of wing beats, landing somewhat roughly, he grunts but doesn't let anything other than the grunt escape his mouth as he stood up, a certain cat in his arms. Kankri rose a brow as he spotted said cat. Was that...?

His thoughts were interrupted and questions answered when the cat jumped out of Qrow's arms, landing on the ground, intense heterochromic eyes trained on him, "Greetings there, you are my brother's superior yes? It is a pleasure to meet you, I am Chesire Davis." The cat says in a weird voice, both male and female in sounding. Curious. Interesting. And weird. But nonetheless, Kankri rolls with it since the cat was so polite and had even bowed slightly in greeting, he had his manners to do the same.

Kankri smiled slightly and nodded his head, "Indeed. I am Kankri Vantas, leader of the Shackled Sufferers and is indeed the superior to your brothers. A pleasure to meet you too Chesire." The strange smile on the cat's face twitched and grew slightly, how strange and slightly concerning.

Qrow looked between both Kankri and Chesire, a strange look on his face, he sighed and rubbed the bridge of his nose underneath his shades before just taking off. "Well, both of you are introduced, what the fuck was so important I had to fly back home so soon? Not that I'm complaining." He said before going over to sit on the couch, passing by Hal and ruffling his hair, mostly to stop the tense look on Hal's face. It worked, Hal huffed and flipped him off for messing with his hair.

Though instantly afterwards, the tense atmosphere was back, even Chesire could feel it, their fur bristling slightly. Kankri sighed, "Make yourself as comfortable as you can Qrow, Chesire... the subject of the matter is very important, and it will take quite the while." He said, motioning them both to do so. Chesire somehow pursed their lips on their muzzle before walking over to jump on towards the couch and sat besides Dave as dignified as they could.

Qrow didn't like the sound of this.

Kankri settled on the other chair, looking grim and serious, Hal settled between them both, sitting on his chair and having the very same face.

"It involved the Striders and Lalondes."

Qrow *really didn't* like the sound of this.

At all.

...

***SHIT.***

---

Qrow grunted, fiddling with the cuffs of his tux.

AR: Bro you're going to have to stop fiddling with your cuffs.

AR: You look fine.

AR: Just keep your glasses on and keep your cool.

AR: You can do this bro.

AR: Huntress is hiding in the shadows.

AR: Everyone's in their posts.

AR: You just have to keep an eye on the Strilondes.

"I know that." Qrow muttered softly as he stopped fiddling with his cuff before he looked into the mirror. He is disturbed by the lack of red eyes and blond hair, his red eyes were replaced with brown and his hair was replaced with black. His shades were gone, replaced with a thickly rimmed circular spectacles, special spectacles that would complete his disguise.

He could have been alright with the black hair, and at least with the help with the glasses he didn't have to wear contacts which would irritated his eyes like a bitch or dye his hair. But still, wearing actual glasses instead of shades was disturbing.

AR: Lookin sharp there big brother.

AR: Knock 'em all dead.

Qrow had to admit, he rocked the black outfit. He was wearing a black and grey striped tailcoat with a white under dress shirt, he had white tux pants and a nice pair of shiny black shoes. He was looking great, even with the color change of his eyes and hair. The glasses were special after all, created by Hal to complete the disguise.

At any rate, he looked fine. He would blend in seamlessly with the other guests of the party.

Speaking of the party...

He took in a deep breath and exited the restroom which was thankfully empty despite the amount of people outside the room itself. No one had the need to use the restroom for a while, not yet.

Qrow had been snucked into the restroom for various reasons, mostly to dress up into his disguise and blend into the guests of the party.

Of the party held by the Lalondes and Striders.

He took in another deep breath, though it hitched when he caught a glimpse of one David 'D' Strider in the crowd, and another glimpse of Rosaline Lalonde.

They had already arrived?

Damn.

This protection mission was definitely as hard as he thought it would be.

Damn whoever put a hit on the Strilondes. Confused? Concerned? Nervous? Qrow felt it all, but for you reader, are you feeling that? Well, let's rewind a bit then...

*A couple of days ago...*

---

## Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed guys, I am still so sorry for everything.

BUT HEY NEXT CHAPTER WILL DEFINITELY NOT TAKE AS LONG AND IT WILL BE THE PREPARATION FOR THE UPCOMING BIG EVENT!! AND THE CONTINUATION OF THIS STORY AFTER SO LONG.

There'll be action! There'll be heartbreak!! There'll be angst!! Look forward to this big event in two or so chapters!

ALSO ALSO BIG NEWS I have a Discord Server now!

[Pyros Hydros Stories](#)

Come by and shout at me for being so late! And talk about new things!

I'll see you all later or maybe in the Discord Server ;]

# Suits and Suites (1)

## Chapter Notes

Yes, I know it's been more than a month but hey at least it didn't take months this time!

Next arc is coming up and I'm actually very hyped for this, I've been planning this for so long but I was kind of preoccupied from my other stories. At any rate! Let the show begin and I hope you enjoy~

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

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*Qrow had been snucked into the restroom for various reasons, mostly to dress up into his disguise and blend into the guests of the party.*

*Of the party held by the Lalondes and Striders.*

*He took in another deep breath, though it hitched when he caught a glimpse of one David 'D' Strider in the crowd, and another glimpse of Rosaline Lalonde.*

*They had already arrived?*

*Damn.*

*This protection mission was definitely as hard as he thought it would be.*

*Damn whoever put a hit on the Strilondes. Confused? Concerned? Nervous? Qrow felt it all, but for you reader, are you feeling that? Well, let's rewind a bit then...*

*A couple of days ago...*

---

"*What do you mean there's a hit on my brothers?!*" Qrow shouts, looking at Kankri with wide eyes, a rare moment where his eyes flashed completely orange from their red- remnants of his spritehood. Quickly, he backtracks as he realizes what he says and he sees Hal's complicated face and he took in a deep breath. Kankri faced him with a solemn and serious face while Chesire looked at him with interested but serious eyes, they, Kankri and Hal didn't comment on the 'brothers' tidbit and lets him recompose. "Why is there a hit on the Striders." Qrow finally says with a completely stoic look.

Lock away the emotion.

Keep the walls up and high.

Don't break.

Don't break.

Keep calm and Stride on.

Kankri continued after Qrow finally calmed down, seeing him finally don his professional facade, unhealthy it is though to repress whatever emotions he must be feeling right now but they had very serious matters to attend to. Qrow could face his emotions later on with Hal and Chesire, that was a family matter and he had no business in it unless he was allowed to. As long as Qrow was functional and could perform his missions properly, he was fine.

"Currently we don't know *who* put up the hit and managed to slip by Psiioniic and everyone else, the current ban on the Striders and Lalondes have officially been lifted and they're now on the crosshairs of those who want the reward." Kankri told him said as he recalled the events, a displeased look on his face. The efforts he put into making sure no hits were put on the Strilondes.

Hal scowled darkly, "They even managed to slip by me." He muttered, feeling very sore and annoyed by that fact. That shouldn't have been possible since he had been an all encompassing A.I. that had control over

the internet right at his finger tips, hell his *pinkie* held more power over the government firewalls ever could hope to get.

But he had noticed.

Ever since he had been turned into a mesh of metal and flesh, his mental processing power was significantly slower than it had been as a body-less Artificial Intelligence. It was something he both loved and hated, he could *feel* now, he had flesh and a body however incomplete it was but his intelligence had lowered- well, it was still high no doubt, he was a fucking genius but unfortunately it didn't live up to when he was just shades.

In moments like these, he missed being all encompassing, to be able to not sleep and eat and capable of digging through the whole internet in minutes with ease. His new physical brain was at its peak, he was capable of so much but he was still *partly* human. He had unfortunate limitations. And in these moments, he cursed those limitations.

The Pros and Cons of having a body, see this is why he had originally wanted a body *built* for him, made completely out of metal without the cons of the mortal, fleshy needs that a human had. But... he had to admit, this new body that contained flesh, feeling, and organic compounds... it wasn't that bad. He had his own body now, lacking as it was but at least he could create the limbs he needed. His still new arm wasn't up to date but he had two hands now, he could focus on making a new arm and a pair of legs.

Qrow frowned, "Shit, really?" Having someone actually capable of slipping by his little brother, that was... concerning. Very concerning.

"Unfortunately." Hal confirmed with a disgruntled dark look on his face. It really ticked him off but he didn't have time to sulk or do anything about it, mostly because it was too late to do anything about it. He had tried to take down the hit, but news had already spread and he couldn't do anything about that. "The fact that they managed to get by me is unfortunate but we should be focusing on what we should do now that the Striders and Lalondes are on the hit list of any bastard that would try to get them."

Kankri nodded in agreement, "Indeed, we already have a plan being thought of to do this, we're going to need everyone to cooperate." He said tensely, looking at Qrow with dark eyes. "*Everyone*. So no matter what the plan is..." He trailed off, still looking at Qrow who scowled at him.

"I get it, you have my cooperation Kankri." He growled, even though everything in him said no, the bad feeling in his gut was growing but he couldn't ignore what was going on.

A voice piped in, they had almost forgotten about their third guest who was originally supposed to be the guest of honor for this meeting. "And mine if it helps any." Chesire purred from their spot, they stared at Kankri with amused but also serious mismatched eyes of pink and lavender.

Kankri wore a crooked smirk, "It will, we can always appreciate a pair of paws on deck." He said smoothly, "With how you're related to our resident Davis's. We're going to make the risky move of trusting you Chesire, you're now apart of the Shackled Sufferers, welcome to the team." He said, bowing his head lightly to the feline who grinned an unnaturally wide smile for a cat.

"It's a pleasure to be part of it~"

A new family member and a new teammate.

Qrow could only hope this would end up well, and for his family to end up safe.

Either family, his ~~old~~ alternate one and his current family.

---

Dirk sighed as he adjusted his tie, grumbling to himself on how unfair it was that he was attending the stupid party in the first place. Usually he didn't join but at least he wasn't going to be alone in suffering from this snobbish charity party.

Don't get him wrong, he liked charities, he liked donating to the less fortunate because that's what's called 'Being a decent person' but he didn't



really like the snobbish people that usually held the charity parties. Not to mention social gatherings with people he didn't really know. Plus it was a proper formal party and he wasn't a big fan of those. Sure, some charity events were fun but those were rare to enjoy. He's more into the raves his Bro would arrange, being a DJ and all and owning a lot of night clubs that held raves and wild fantastical parties that wouldn't stop till dawn.

Proper formal parties were too stiff and only D could fully fake the act of pretending he enjoyed the damned events. And even then, in private he would complain on how it went.

But being the famous family that they were, they had to suck it up and be part of this charity event. Again, he was so glad he wasn't going to suffer in this alone. His friends would be there too. They'd all be there.

All of them.

Except.

...

His hands dropped to his side as he thought about his younger brother, Da-Qrow, wasn't going to join tonight's party. Why would he? They had no idea where he was and 'supposedly' he had nothing to do with them, he was a 'stranger' that wasn't part of their family and wasn't invited to Doctor Scratch's charity event.

Qrow was still a strange subject to them all, the fact that he existed was strange and damning. He seemed like Dave, which he was Dirk and his brothers were sure of it but... Just thinking of the way Qrow tried to keep his distance, away from the Striders and their friends... It hurt.

A couple of days had passed, they had met with Qrow the day after he took Frigglish away. The cat now had a pink collar with lavender seems and a nice little metal tag that had a cat symbol on it with a pointed princess hat on its head and what looked like tentacles coming from behind the head. It was a strange thing but Roxy and Rose loved it, and so did Frigglish by the looks of it.

When asked about the symbol Qrow had just shrugged and said his little brother thought it would fit Frigglish, and that the collar was the kind that could be taken off quickly in case something snagged it and Frigglish couldn't escape. It was a good idea, being able to take it off and put it on easily. Rose and Roxy certainly appreciated the collar and paid the ten bucks that Qrow had said it would cost the day before, after that, they had tried to coax and persuade Qrow into joining them for the day.

Unsurprisingly, he denied and quickly left, looking tense as ever.

Trying to follow him led to nowhere since he had disappeared not long after they tried to follow him to where he was going. He was skilled in doing that, disappearing to nowhere or blending into the crowd, it would be impressive if it wasn't used on them.

The Lalonde Mothers and Dirk's older brothers were surprised by the new collar and where it came from, not to mention... Qrow's situation.

As expected, D and Bro were both angry at the fact that Qrow was hurt. So was Dirk, but Qrow didn't trust Dirk or any of them enough to tell them what happened. But at least he was healing.

Dirk hated the fact that while *they* were going to attend some random party arranged by some random rich guy that Dirk had no idea about, Qrow was out there somewhere with his '*little brother*' and was healing on his own. They should be looking for him, helping him.

But they couldn't afford to drive him away. That was the only reason why Dirk wasn't doing anything rash. That and the others managed to convince him and his brothers to stay clear-minded. They couldn't risk driving Qrow away, if they were going to get any answers, the best way was to slowly bring Qrow to them.

Confronting him about what happened wouldn't do anything, Qrow would probably just shut up and down and wouldn't talk to them or they'd make things worst and...

It was a complicated situation for everyone involved.

Dirk sighed and looked around his room.

It was a big room, good enough for him. Good enough for two people.

Which was what it was supposed to be.

This was supposed to be his and Dave's room.

Dave's bed was supposed to be adjacent to his, hugging the other wall which was supposed to be covered in photographs and whatever thing that his little brother would hang on the wall, his skate board was supposed to be lying besides his. Their closet was supposed to be filled with both their clothes, and Dave's desk would be at the foot of his bed with his laptop where he would be doodling whatever shitty drawing or doing his homework and begrudgingly ask Dirk for help when he couldn't make sense of the stupid question that would stop him. His sound board would be besides the desk where Dave was supposed to mix and make whatever music he wanted.

Dave was supposed to be lying on his bed, asking random questions and listing out random bird facts like the dork he was and he was supposed to pester Dirk into whatever he wanted to do because it was too boring to stay in bed and in the room for long if he wasn't doing anything important.

He was supposed to be standing besides Dirk, wearing a replica suit but in different colors, preferably red because they had a whole color scheme going as brothers and as a family. He was suppose to complain with Dirk about the charity event, Dirk would mess with him, mess with his hair and Dave would try to do the same in retaliation and their brothers would come in, see the mess and fix it so they could get to the event on time.

He and Dave were supposed to bicker in the back of the car, or listen to what Dave or Bro cooked up on their musical mixers and soundboards. They'd arrive at the party with bored looks and join Jake, Jane, Roxy, Rose, John and Jade in their own little private group where they'd make their own fun and complain to themselves on how boring the event was as their guardians joined the social event and do adult stuff. They'd all go home when enough was enough or when the event ended and Dave and him

would doze off at the back of the car. Bro would carry them himself like sack potatoes and he and D would make them change out of their stiff tuxes and brush their teeth before tucking them into bed.

That was how it was supposed to be.

But now.

Dirk was alone in the room, his bed hugging to the wall with blueprints and other things pinned to the wall, his brother's pictures mostly. Dave's bed and desk had been moved out, Dirk couldn't bear to have it in his room but he kept the soundboard, it was clean and unused and sat where Dave's bed was supposed to be. Dave's side of the room had been transformed into Dirk's. This whole room was Dirk's. The closet didn't have much of Dave's clothes in it anymore. Dirk kept all the photographs and drawings and whatever else Dave had on his wall before, he kept it in a box that was deep within their... *his* closet.

This room was Dirk's.

And he hated that.

If Qrow was Dave.

Which he *was*.

Then Qrow should be here with him.

This would be their room again.

Dirk scowled, roughly wiping away the unshed tears that were at his eyes. He was *not* going to cry now of all times.

Outside his room, Bro and D were waiting in the kitchen. They were thinking similar thoughts, similar to Dirk's but also somewhat different.

"I swear the moment we get whoever hurt our little bro out of his lips, I'm hunting him down." Bro grumbled, still not over the fact that Qrow was hurt. The kid had bandages around his neck for god's sake! Just what had

happened to him? Being unable to find out or help, that frustrated the elder Strider so much.

D was in the same boat but at least he was handling it better than his little brother was, "Calm down, we'll get through this eventually." He said, trying to soothe and calm his brother. But he was just as frustrated as he was.

"Oh, and going through this involves joining this charity event?" Bro scoffs with derision, scowling at the eldest Strider.

"Believe me, I'd rather not go but unfortunately we don't really have a choice. I already out down the other events before trying to help you with Qrow, can't miss out this one. Especially with the host being Dr. Scratch." D sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. "The guy's an enigma, all his parties though are top notch, and if I declined- well, the paparazzi is going to hound my ass and make bogus fucking rumors on how I don't like Dr. Scratch. Remember Liza Lily?" He caught Bro's disgruntled look and snorted, "Exactly. It's better that we go than not go."

Bro had to concede to that, however reluctantly so. He still didn't want to go but D had a point there.

D nodded when he saw Bro concede, just then, his phone set off and let him know that Rosanna had messaged him.

---

-- typographicalGenius [TG] began pestering texanTotality [TT] --

TG: We're ready to go now.

TG: Shall I assume you and your brothers are too?

TG: Casey is awaiting.

TT: dirk's still in his room

TT: but he should be ready by now

TT: and so is bro so we're all ready too

TT: can't wait for you guys to show up

TT: also i thought you'd give casey the night off

TG: I did.

TG: But she insisted.

TG: I tried to persuade her but she's incredibly stubborn.

TG: She says she would take us tonight so she could have an extra day off in her schedule for an important day of her family.

TT: aight

TT: as long as she's driving and not you

TG: Have a problem with my driving Strider?

TT: the fact you aren't a race car driver and a writer is fucking baffling lalonde

TT: seriously i think only rox can properly stomach your driving

TG: Ouch.

TG: You do know I can drive responsibly correct?

TT: that's a rare event that i have yet to seen

TT: whenever you're at the wheel and i'm with you you're driving like hell's nipping your fucking ass

TT: wait a fucking minute

TT: do you do that on fucking purpose

TT: i swear to god rosa

TG: Oh would you look at that, it's time for us to leave and pick you up.

TG: See you in twenty minutes David darling.

TT: ROSA

-- typographicalGenius [TG] ceased pestering texanTotality [TT] --

---

"The time has come, please tell me that everything is ready."

"Yes. Everything is ready."

"Excellent, the show will begin momentarily and we all have our parts to play~"

"What of the girl?"

"What about her?"

"She's clearly against this, at least the boy can follow orders properly and is looking forward to this operation."

"She will do nothing out of the ordinary, pay her no mind but do keep an eye on her. She knows her place."

"I don't get why we keep her around, though she is an excellent student, she's too soft-hearted and kind for this. Hard to believe she's part of the family."

"Indeed, she gets it from her mother. And she's around because she's actually quite useful once you know how to use her. She's around the same age as the other children, especially a certain child that is in contact with her right now, however rare they get to speak."

"... You and your long term plans. I still remember those two freaks of nature, imagine my surprise when I saw the angel boy of the Shackled. So similar to that prisoner of yours from long ago, heard he has a partner, I'll assume that he's the test subject you kept?"

"You assume correct, however I believe we should stop conversing, our time is running short, we must all get to our places."

"Fine. We'll get to our places. I must admit, I'm curious as to what this, 'show' will be about."

"In time my dear. In time. The main characters are on their way."

"How exciting."

"Indeed, now, if you'll excuse me Lady Snowman, we should be parting soon."

"Right, goodbye Scratch, I'll see you after the party."

---

Qrow adjusted the bow-tie with a grim and disgruntled look, grumbling to himself on how unfair it was that *he* was supposed to be part of the party. Why couldn't he be recon like Nepeta? Stay in the shadows and keep *outside* the party? Hell, he could fight off the incoming assassins with fucking *Dammek*! Anything! Anything but to be in the party where he would be surrounded by rich assholes and be near the Striders, Lalondes- just, *everyone* there.

Unfortunately he couldn't.

Because at the same time, he *wanted* to be in there. To see the Striders himself, the Lalondes, the Egberts, Crockers, Harleys/English- he had to see them himself. Because even if he was fucking terrified of them seeing him, he had to see them, to see that they were alright.

They were people that he knew of, people that he cared about, even if he hadn't really met some of them like the Alpha Kids and Guardians, Rosanna and David, Dirk and Roxy, he hadn't met them nor of Jane and Jake. Not personally, Alpha timeline Dave had met them, and this universe's Dave had as well.

Qrow had been Davesprite, the extra, the one Doomed Dave that traveled back and managed to avoid death by prototyping himself with the Kernalsprite. Something he probably shouldn't have done but had been too late to do anything about it since he had already did the damn thing. He had fought off Jack Noir along with his Bro, his wing had been sliced off and his Bro died. He probably shouldn't have prototyped so Bro could have come back, he'd be a better guide to Dave maybe.

He had gone on a three year trip where his wing slowly grew back with the help of Nanasprite, and it was... alright in the beginning, he had attempted to date Jade but that ended horribly, it was for the best he and Jade broke up. But after that... He had stayed in the background, mostly forgotten by John and Jade. Though he had done it himself since he avoided them as much as he could as well.



He was Davesprite, the extra Dave. The 'not-real' Dave as John had implied.

He was Davesprite, the Doomed Dave that survived.

But now... Now, he was Qrow. The Davis that looked like Dave.

He was his own person now.

He wasn't Dave.

He wasn't.

He had a little brother, Hal who perfectly understood him and he understood him.

They were extras that had tried to help their originals and ended up in this new universe as themselves.

"Here bro, finished the glasses."

The blond blinked, snapping out of his thoughts and he turned back to see Hal rolling into the room, glasses in one metallic hand. "Oh, thanks." He said, accepting the thickly rimmed glasses that would soon take place of his shades. Its disturbing but it was necessary, he couldn't believe he was actually doing this. "So how do I work these things."

Hal snorted and propped his head on his palm, leaning against the armrest of his specialized wheelchair, "Well, first off, put those things on." Qrow did as he said, "Second, tap the left lens, it'll bring up the menu." He smirked when Qrow did exactly that, looking a bit stunned as the holographic screen came up with a picture of his face and a goddamn color wheel. "Yeah, bask in my glory motherfucker. I did that. Now, this isn't really a perfect disguise, the idea is that the glasses will cover your face. A holographic projection will come up over your eyes and hair." Hal explained as Qrow messed with the color wheel, looking into the mirror and messing around, snorting at the sight of the red-haired Qrow.

"Try not to move your hair too much or let it mess up so much or else your hair's true color will be revealed and the moment the glasses leave your nose the disguise will go down so try not to loose them. They're the only pair I managed to make in such a short time even if I was planning for that shit for a long time." Hal warned, watching his brother settle for black hair.

Qrow nodded, experimentally running a hand through his now black-colored hair. Hal was right, he could see strands of blond hair appearing as he moved it, they disappeared when his hair settled. "Got it, don't move the hair much and don't loose the glasses." Qrow confirmed as he brushed his hair, watching the strands and patches of blond appear and disappear. He then went on to his eyes.

It was silent between them before Hal spoke again, "You sure you can do this Qrow? No one will blame you if you switch out with someone else." Hal said, knowing how fucked up he was over this decision. He both understood and didn't understand Qrow's decision of personally being in the party as it happened.

Qrow paused, his eyes a bright blue, he cringed and quickly changed it to light brown. "Yeah. I'll be fine. I'll be... cool." He said as he looked back to his little brother.

Hal was blank-faced before shaking his head and wheeling closer to Qrow and gently tugging Qrow down to lean down to his level, he wrapped his arms around Qrow who was briefly startled, enough to let the glasses slide off his face. The disguise disappeared and his hair was back to blond and his eyes were their original red. The glasses clattered but thankfully landed in Hal's chair.

"... Everything's going to be fine big bro."

Qrow was frozen but then quickly wrapped his arms around Hal in turn, breathing turning a touch bit heavier.

Everything was going to be fine.

The moment was broken though as Hal's shades pinged, a message.

From Chesire.

---

-- acknowledgedLeonine [AL] began pestering automaticRecreator [AR] --

AL: the lalondes are currently prepawring for their depawrture.

AL: also, still very meowch loving this collar

AL: paws free computing device

AL: at any rate

AL: i believe that salamewncer is coming soon right?

AL: batter get brother dearest to the show before they arrive

AR: Got it.

AR: He's ready, got the disguise glasses on and everything.

AR: Looking sharp and totally not him.

AL: oh, do show :3c

AR: Alright, hold on.

-- automaticRecreator [AR] send a picture! --

AL: handsome~~

AR: Right?

AR: Anyway we're ready.

AR: Looks like Bossman is ready too.

AL: i'll keep you all in touch as to what's going on

AL: eldritch out <3

-- acknowledgedLeonine [AL] ceased pestering automaticRecreator [AR] --

---

Time to go.

Let's just hope everything would be fine.

---

*"EVERYONE ON THE GROUND!"*

*Screaming.*

*Glass shattering.*

*Blood splattering.*

*"What the **fuck**--"*

*Metal meeting metal.*

*Bones cracking.*

*"DAVE!"*

*Eyes wide as a body was thrown.*

---

Or not.

---

## Chapter End Notes

Yeah this arc is going to be a hoot >:]

Hope you enjoyed!

Join the server if you want! Warning though, it's pretty chaotic in there but everyone seems to be having a good time and having fun! You can send fan art, discuss with other people and even if you don't do that, there's a lot of people you can talk with or something! At any rate, even if you don't do anything, you know that the server exists!

[Pyros Hydros Stories](#)

## Suits and Suites (2)

### Chapter Notes

We have amazing fan art. Look at this! Look at it!



See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

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Qrow arrived at the building on time, disguised and ready for his position.

He'd been smuggled into the building as covertly as they successfully could.

Everyone was getting into their positions for the party, but only a few would actually be involved into the party- which of course, included Qrow himself.

He felt nervous, taking in deep breaths as the party would soon start and he would be within the crowded area, blending in while keeping an eye on the Strilondes and any other person that would surround them, but most specifically the Strilondes since they were the ones that were the main targets and were the most beneficial in terms of money and reward.

Bagging one of them would set a criminal for two life times.

The disguised mercenary held back an irritated growl and just took in another deep breath, holding it in before letting it go.

He could do this.

He was fine. He could do this, it wasn't going to be easy, he wasn't an idiot nor was he naive to think *that* but he *hoped* that it was going to be significantly *less* hard than it should be.

Whether or not his hopes would be crushed later on, well, they'd see.

Qrow grunted, fiddling with the cuffs of his tux.

AR: Bro you're going to have to stop fiddling with your cuffs.

AR: You look fine.

AR: Just keep your glasses on and keep your cool.

AR: You can do this bro.

AR: Huntress is hiding in the shadows.

AR: Everyone's in their posts.

AR: You just have to keep an eye on the Strilondes.

“I know that.” He muttered softly in reply as he stopped fiddling with his cuff before he looked into the mirror with perturbed brown eyes.

AR: Lookin sharp there big brother.

AR: Knock ‘em all dead.

Qrow Davis sucked in a last deep breath and exited the restroom.

Show time.

---

Rose loved her mother dearly, and her half-sister and her cousins the Striders.

But she sometimes loathed the amount of fame that was garnered on their names, it was admittedly very annoying during specific times. And these were definitely one of those times.

Like Dirk, she never usually liked the parties and events that they would typically be invited to. Even though she acted proper and *maybe* a little snobbish and stuff most of the time, it didn't really mean that she actually enjoyed being *around* actually snobbish and rich people that tended to flock parties like these.

That and not a lot of children and teens were in these parties.

At least, children and teens that she could get along with or stand.

Thankfully, nearly everyone was present and accounted for- nearly. Jake and Jane couldn't make it, Jake had gotten sick and Jane seemed to have gotten sick from when she came over to visit and give him medicine. An unfortunate thing but it was something that they, the teens that didn't want to be part of the party, were envying much.

John and Jane's Dad stayed behind to look after them, along with Jake and Jade's grandfather.

So now, it was just Rose, Roxy, Dirk, John and Jade attending the party. Just the five of them. ~~It would've been better if they had been six.~~

It was manageable at least, with the five of them together within the mass of adults that attended the charity soiree that was hosted by one of the most mysterious rich host that Rose had never really heard of. One Mr. Scratch that hosted a party that he wouldn't even attend to because of some obscure reason, cancer most people theorized and reasoned because after all, this was a charity event for medical programs and those that dealt with cancer and the like.

Still, Rose couldn't help but feel like something was wrong.

But it was drowned underneath the utter boredom and inane feelings that the blond-haired girl was experiencing shortly after arriving to the event with her sister and friends. They had all arrived on a timely manner after picking up the Striders from their abode, arriving not too early but not too late.

She and the others stuck close to the adults for the time being, it was too early to break off and try to entertain themselves, not to mention their adult guardians very much wanted to keep an eye on them at first, make sure that they were alright before moving on and letting them do what they wanted. As long as they didn't do anything stupid or something reckless, which rarely happened.

Though her mother and aunt had emphasized to her and Roxy on how important it was *not* to cause or participate on a ruckus during this event. This Scratch person was really influential and could cause quite the impact it seemed, Dirk had been told the same and the three blonds relayed it to their darker haired friends, especially telling John *not* to play any pranks. Which made the young Egbert pout but nod in understanding, he didn't want to affect any of their families' reputation in a particularly bad way.

Sure he was infamous for his pranks but he did have a line he'd rather not cross, like the time he had accidentally broke one of his classmates bones for it. That really made him feel bad.



At any rate, they would be and were expected to be on their best behavior tonight. Rose just hopes they can find other ways to clear up their boredom in the meanwhile, or maybe they could leave early for some other reason? It was a possibility.

She just wanted something relatively exciting to clear her and her family-friend's boredom.

However, maybe she should've been more careful in her wording, or at least specify it more clearly because the following events that happened in the near future was *definitely* not the exciting thing she had wanted for the evening!

But that was in the near future, and this was the present.

And in this present, Rose was looking around with a slightly bored look as the others talked around her, she occasionally gave in her two cents but nothing in the conversation really stoked an interest to her. She looked around, trying to mentally catalog the adults around her, trying to see if she recognized them and if not, try to mentally deduct on who they were or how they lived.

As she did so, she paused as she spotted someone of interest.

It was a boy around her age, dressed in an inconspicuous but rather handsome tux. His hair was black and his eyes were brown behind his circular shaped glasses, he seemed oddly familiar and it sparked an interest within her. Rose wondered on where the hell she had seen him before, she prided herself on being capable of remembering the faces and names of everyone she meets and she was very sure she had met that boy before.

Said boy didn't seem to have noticed her, rather he was looking anywhere *but* her direction, he seemed rather distracted.

"Rosie? Hey, Rooosieeee~" Rose blinked, her stare broken as she glanced to look at her sister who looked concerned and amused, "Welcome back to Earth sis, what's going on? You were staring at that guy for a long time- oh, did my precious lil' Rosie have a crush on first sight on a booy~?" Roxy

questioned with a mischievous smile and look on her face, and getting the attention of the rest of their friends.

"Rose has a crush on a boy?" "Woah what?" "Cool! Who is he? Do we know him?"

Rose sighed with deep exasperation and shook her head, shushing her sister and friends and giving them a firm glare, "I do *not* have a crush on a boy. I'm not even certain I'm interested in the gender- no, we're not about to have this conversation now of all time but if you must know the reason why I'm staring at the boy over there is because he seems really familiar. I cannot place on where I've seen him before." She told them, motioning to the still distracted black-haired boy across the room. He had moved but was still in sight, he was now at the buffet table, getting a few snacks it seems.

They blinked at her reason and looked over to the boy themselves, the boy twitched, as if sensing their stares but didn't do anything about it. "Aww, really?" Roxy complained lightly, her brief surprise at Rose's admittance to being possibly gay sliding right off. Rose had said they weren't going to talk about it now so they could talk about it later. Still, as she looked at the boy at the buffet table, she couldn't help but cock her head to the side in confusion. "Huh... You know what, I think he's kind of familiar too."

Dirk frowned, crossing his arms and looking at the boy with a firm stare, "Strangely enough, me too." He admitted, cocking his head as well, "Where the hell did I see him?"

John and Jade exchanged a confused look and looked back to their friends, "I think we all saw him before- but um, I guess we can't remember where we saw him? God that's so weird!" Jade complained lightly, and quietly, she didn't want to get the attention of the adults surrounding them.

The boy of their attention suddenly straightens, either he finally noticed the fact he was being stared at or was finally acknowledging it and was looking in the direction of the combined staring of five teenagers around his age. He turns, a sharp look on his face that falters at the sight of them.

Eyes were said to be the window to the soul, an entrance and opening, eyes were important when communicating with someone with the rare exceptions of those who couldn't see or those who unfortunately had no eyes to look into. But the eyes are an important part of one's face, an important piece on expressing one's self. When reading a person itself, the eyes were a big tell if they weren't trained properly.

Rose prided herself in her ability of reading a person, especially if they looked her in the eyes.

And the boy's eyes were telling as their gazes met. Expressive brown eyes, there was so much going on in there. ~~The cons of relying on shades to hide his red, red eyes.~~

Recognition. Shock. Regret. Immense regret. Panic. Sadness. Hardening emotions. Determination-- their gaze broke and the boy looked away.

Despite his expressive eyes, his face was a polite mask, a bit blank but it blended in with the rest of the crowd. Something itched in Rose's chest, something *off*- which was something she'd describe the strange expressive yet blank-faced boy that caught her attention. Uncomfortably familiar and yet Rose was sure she had both seen and never seen this black-haired, brown-eyed boy in her life.

His face is what's familiar. But the colors are throwing her off.

She wouldn't realize this until later. *Much* later.

"... There's something off about him."

Dirk is mirroring her frown, he was probably thinking the same thing being the genius he was.

And Roxy, well, as much as she acted eccentric, she was still a Lalonde and was no doubt in the know of their mental wavelength. Roxy smile, small and slightly sharp, "Let's find out why he's so off then." She proposed, sharing a knowing look with her fellow blonds. Their dark-haired friends,

Jade and John, could only look on helplessly as their smarter, light-haired friends plotted to stalk some boy they had surely never met before.

Whenever someone caught their interest from outside their circle- it never ended on a peaceful note. John and Jade could only follow in hopes that nothing too reckless happened- and here *John* was supposed to be the pranking troublemaker.

---

Stealth missions were something Qrow could do.

Perks from being raised by his ~~psychopathic~~ *skilled* brother who not only taught him his combat skills, but also his more surreptitious skills. Like how to silence his steps, how to move in the shadows with grace and silently sneak his way anywhere. Though Nepeta definitely had an upper hand, she was more skilled at stealth than he was but he could at least keep up with her which was an achievement that he was actually proud of.

However there were many types of stealth missions, ranging from moving in the shadows- to disguising oneself and blending in with the crowd.

Qrow very much preferred missions that had him moving in the shadows. It was so much easier that way and had less social involvement. He'd be able to keep to himself within the darkness and move to his target to either kill them or protect them if need be.

Unfortunately, this mission had him in disguise. Something he had done before, just, not to this calibre. He didn't usually have to wear a tux and blend into a crowd of rich people, acting like he was the son of some obscure rich person attending the charity event. He didn't usually have to do that *and* have his hair and eyes a different color. And even though there was something perched on his nose, they weren't his shades.

They were clear glasses.

They exposed his eyes.

They exposed his eyes.

Which were a different color.

The Strilondes were so lucky that Qrow was determined to help them out of this whole goddamn mess. ~~Why though? He could've let them be, let them die--~~

AR: Bro.

AR: Qrow.

AR: Qrow, you're going to start hyperventilating and have a panic attack at this point.

AR: Or dissociate.

AR: Either of the two.

AR: Calm down bro, you got this.

AR: It's not too late to switch with Nepeta you know.

Qrow sucked in a deep breath, letting out a forced chuckle. They both knew it was a lie. But it was a comforting lie that Qrow took whole-heartedly.

"Thanks but no thanks bro, Nepeta wouldn't last a minute in here with a dress on." She never liked dresses, too restrictive in her honest opinion, she'd wear a skirt but dresses were something she'd rather not wear anywhere if she could help it.

AR: Point.

AR: Actually I don't think she has a dress.

AR: She probably shredded her previous dresses.

AR: But anyway, you're okay here bro.

AR: Just keep your cool and your distance.

AR: Nothing else.

AR: We're sticking to the plan.

"I know that dunkass." Qrow mumbled back to him with a small smile, sighing as he politely dodged another rich adult, offering a polite vague smile that he copied from the other adults to one particular adult that peered at him curiously. He had to close his eyes as he offered the polite smile though, hiding away his expressive eyes.

He had one of the best pokerfaces there were. He had to. Also, Kankri gave him a few facial lessons, mimicking the polite smiles from the adults around him- his face was surprisingly malleable if he let down his pokerface. Almost perfect for infiltration missions Kankri had told him but he knew that Qrow didn't like those kind of stealth missions. The only downside though was the fact his eyes were so expressive, the fact he relied on his awesome shades and goggles to hide his eyes was unfortunately a con.

Probably something that Kan-that *Crimson* wanted to rectify if there were more infiltration missions in the future that involved him but for now, Qrow tirelessly kept a calm facade and hoped that his eyes weren't being too expressive on his face.

The look on Rose's face earlier though didn't make him that confident. He could only try to loose their interest somehow, or at least loose their sights on his person.

"I almost forgot on how observant Rose can be." Qrow muttered lowly as he silently circled around the room, keeping a close but manageable distance from the Strilondes. Mostly the adults- they had the biggest targets on their backs, bigger than Rose, Dirk and Roxy. He ignores how his stomach rolls at the sight of Bro, casual but also suavely conversing with some big-shot rich guy alongside Alph- alongside D.

AL: quite the mewstake brother.

AL: you obviously need a reminder about my scutinous skills

AL: though my other is admittedly less skilled than i

AL: you shouldn't let your guard down around her ;3c

Qrow's eye twitched and he made an effort not to frown, "Cheshire." He says rather than asks in a low deadpan.

AR: I added them into the chat.

AR: They've got sibling access.

AR: Probably not the best family bonding chat time but I thought it'd be better to set this up sooner rather than later.

AL: what are you talking about?

AL: this is the purrfect family bonding chat time

AL: i have the liberty to talk to my brothers anytime i want

AL: especially now of all time

AL: i've situated myself besides nepeta within the vents

AL: pawrdon, i've situated myself besides \*huntress\* within the vents

AL: i must get used to using codenames

AL: she also says hello by the way

AR: Hello Huntress.

Qrow nearly rolls his eyes but says nothing, not because he doesn't want to, but because he's suddenly struck into a conversation by a random affluent stranger. Not good. He doesn't want to talk to anyone in this goddamn party. He just wants to keep an eye on a certain pair of family and a group of familiar people dammit! It wasn't even a full hour into the goddamn charity event yet, dinner wasn't being served and things seemed deceptively calm which made things all the worse.

AL: i'd say it'd be rude for avian not to say anything but i see he's quite busy at the moment

AR: Indeed. I don't envy him.

AR: I guess there's perks to having no legs and being part metal.

AL: and being a charming cat >:3c

AL: though i do wonder on how i would look with a tux

AL: i think i'd look rather amazing wouldn't you agree brother?

AR: Yeah.

AR: We got the fortunate SBURB gene blessing that makes us look impeccably sexy no matter what form we take.

AR: Gotta give the game that.

AL: ;3

AL: frivolous matters aside

AL: this charity event, it's host is...

AR: Doc Scratch, yeah.

AL: ...

AL: i am intrigued on this universe's version of the cueball headed puppet

AL: whether or not his head is actually a cueball or if he's managed to turn into a human

AL: i don't suppose that he's present for the event itself?

AR: Unfortunately, no.

AR: No one in the party seem to be Scratch, but then again, we have no idea.A

AR: No one knows what the guy looks like aside those from the The Felt.

AR: And they don't say anything physical about him, we don't have a completely built image him in any of our sources.

AR: I can't even find a lick of what he looks like **\*\*anywhere\*\***.

Motherfucker is slipperier than a fucking slimy eel being handled by buttered hands.

AL: in the mood for seafood?

AR: Like you don't fucking believe, when this is over, we're gonna have a sushi party.

AL: >:3

AL: huntress and i very much agree dear brother~

AR: Anyway, back to Doctor Cuebitch.

AR: We're pretty much sure that he and Lord English is behind the whole **\*bounty bullshit\*** that's happening right now. No proof other than the fact the Striders and the Lalondes are being targeted, personally that's proof enough for me but unfortunately we can't really act on that shit.

AR: Organization boundaries at that bullshit.

AR: Can't go accusing other groups without legitimate proof, don't want to fucking start a whole war based on it.

AR: Crimson doesn't want to start one.

AL: not yet?



AR: Maybe.

AR: You never know, but for now, we're doing this instead.

AR: Avian's doing fine so far, you're doing great bro, that's it.

AL: polite smiles brother, you can do it

AL: dodge to the left, little rose and her entourage are coming your way from the left

Qrow's lips twitched a bit and he subtly nodded his thanks to the nearest vent- whether or not Nepeta or Chesire were in that vent didn't matter, Hal would tell them otherwise as he made his way left to avoid the incoming group of familiar teens. He let out a small sigh of relief as he does so. He had managed to break away from the polite conversation with the stranger in time, his attention halved as he paid attention to both what his siblings were saying and what was going on around him.

He had to focus, he had unintentionally let his guard down earlier on when Rose caught sight of him, too busy with his inner thoughts and admittedly *not* paying attention to her and the others. He had to forego his initial uncomfortable feelings about his surroundings and focus on the mission on hand.

Focus on the mission on hand.

The conversation from his siblings, Hal and Chesire helped his focus. Moving away from inner thoughts and getting more into the mindset of things. Unhealthily as it was but hey, that wasn't what was important right now. What was important was to make sure the Striders and Lalondes would live to see the future. Tonight was the main date for the bounty, the most convenient and most effective time for an attack.

Which is why they were there in the party in the first place with Qrow being in the heart of the event with Nepeta and Chesire as his main back-up. They were within the vents, silently creeping around and keeping an eye at the party. Kankri and Dammek were somewhere in the building, patrolling the floors as discretely as they could. Dexter was in another building, on the third-top floor, taking hold of the surveillance digitally alongside Hal. Xefros wasn't directly involved with this mission despite his protests, he

was back in the base, holding down the fort and making sure everything would be fine when they all came back, preparing medical equipment and emergency maneuvers should things go south for them. *Really* go south for them. Like **Code Red, everything's gone to shit**, kind of south.

The Shackled Sufferers wasn't a big group. At most, there were about less than a hundred active members of the Sufferers, it boosted up to a little over a hundred and fifteen if they included the 'unofficial' and non-active members that were more like close allies at best and well-known acquaintances at worst. Kankri obviously couldn't have every member involved with this admittedly critical but also somewhat personal mission, there were about twenty-five of them involved including him, Qrow and the others (Hal was somewhat exempted since he was safe at the Nest Base), the rest were back in the base- some were even on rather important missions but most of them were with Xefros awaiting orders and reports from the situation at hand.

With how much the two famous families were worth going for however, twenty-five hidden bodyguards weren't going to be enough.

"Woah there motherfucker, you look so fucking different I'd really think you weren't my birdly brother motherfucker if I all didn't know about them cool-ass specs your little brother made up for you."

Which is where their new alliance with the Mirthful Church came in handy.

AR: Ah shit.

AR: And here I was almost hoping that the Makaras and clown weirdos bailed out on us.

AR: ... Almost...

Qrow's eye twitched from behind his glasses as he turned at a reasonable pace to look at one grinning Gamzee Makara. He'd actually been hoping the same as Hal, though the world '*almost*' wasn't involved whatsoever.

AL: hmmm

AL: as much as you dislike the makaras

AL: you must admit he does clean up nicely when he isn't being an obnoxious juggalo

As begrudging as it would be, Qrow *would* agree with Chesire.

Gamzee Makara, when not looking either like he was some lazy, high-of-his-ass, stoner looking teen or a face-painted, half-mask wearing clown psychopath, actually looked like a decent gentleman. His hair, for once, wasn't crazily disheveled in a way he had just woken up and never bothered to comb it- oh don't get him wrong, it was still disheveled but somehow it had been styled in a way that looked *decent* as it matched his mostly make-up free face. Qrow could spy a little bit of mascara and skin foundation on the teen's face, probably to hide the eyebags and to look more sophisticated. And honestly? It *worked* on this guy.

He wore a smooth dark purple suit, no polka dots, no stripes, just a completely smooth shade of dark purple that paired nicely with the light purple undershirt that was underneath the dark purple suit jacket. Around his neck and underneath the neatly folded collar of the light purple shirt was an ink-black tie that was pinned down by a golden circular pin with an elegantly painted symbol on it. It was the Capricorn symbol obviously since it was the Makara Family symbol. His pants were the same dark purple and he actually wore properly black shoes that seemed to be made of some type of expensive leather.

The damned youngest Makara regularly wore jewelry, he usually just wore a pair of black studs on his ears and some funky looking wristbands but right now, he sported glinting silver earring studs and was actually wearing a golden wristwatch and purple-tinted metal rings on a few of his fingers.

All in all, Gamzee Makara looked like a handsome rich boy.

And the motherfucker obviously *knew* it goddammit since he was smirking at Qrow with a knowing glint in his purple eyes.

The disguised blond scowled at him, breaking away from the polite facade that he had meticulously copied- not really but it was a hassle to keep it up for these rich snobs okay?- to aim a glower at the well-dressed clown

cultist. "Same for me, if it weren't for the fact your vocabulary is so goddamn horrendous I'd actually think you weren't a masochistic battle-hungry juggalo asshole that wants to get his ass kicked daily." Qrow replied dryly and quietly. Thankfully they were slightly away from the major crowds of the room, and as Qrow quickly checked, still in the vicinity of the Strilondes. Still, it was better to talk in hushed voices rather than normally just to be safe.

Gamzee's face actually twitched in irritation before he aimed a lecherous and suggestive smile at Qrow, "How'd you all up an know I was interested in that kind of naughty shit brother? If I'm a masochist, would you be my sadist you birdly motherfucker?" He said with a low tone that had Qrow flushing with anger. It had to be anger. And maybe a bit of embarrassment as he sent the damned clown a withering glare. Gamzee cracked a grin and chuckled, dropping the smile completely to look pleasantly amused.

AR: \*Wow\*.

AR: I hate him so much.

AL: i actually find him quite amewsing.

AR: I don't.

AR: Think we can get him kicked out of the party or something?

AL: huntress says that as much as she wants that to happen, it would pawsibbly jeopardize the plan.

AL: also she asks why the furrick he and kurloz were late.

"Sorry brother, and furry-sister wherever the shit you are-" Gamzee starts when Qrow relays the question to him.

Qrow interrupts him with a deadpan, "She's in the vent behind us, and she says not to call her furry-sister." It's an amusing name but he didn't dare refer Nepeta as a furry- not on a mission, maybe outside a mission when things weren't as serious and Nepeta was in more of a good mood but not now. Both boys could hear the slight hiss of irritation coming from the vent behind them. Qrow knew that was Nepeta, having heard it a thousand times over.

Gamzee merely grins at the hiss, glancing back at the vent with clear amusement before continuing on as if Qrow hadn't interrupted him, "-but Kurloz and I had to be all motherfucking fashionably late and all. Dad went up and told us to be, also, unlike you motherfuckers, Kurloz and I had to go through the motherfucking Sylla-detector." He told them with a slight grimace that was mixed horribly with a pout.

Ah yes, the sylladex-detecting machine that was used in the party. A 'Sylla-detector' for short, as ridiculous sounding the name was. It was a device that could scan the cards within one's sylladex, making sure that there was nothing dangerous or suspicious being brought into the party that was hidden within someone's sylladex. It was a very handy creation, installed in every store and various other places to make sure nothing was stolen from stores or nothing dangerous was being brought into a place. It was one of the reasons why Qrow had to be smuggled into the party in such a way, Hal had yet to create a way to dupe the machines and there wasn't enough time to create *that* **and** the disguising glasses.

"That all up and reminds me- mind giving a brother his threads and clubs?" Gamzee asked Qrow, an expectant look on his face.

Qrow grunted, half-tempted *not* to give Gamzee his things before just internally shaking his head and reached for the cards in his 'dex, discretely handing a set of cards into Gamzee's hand. The cards contained both the Makara's weapons and darker more **professional** clothing.

It had been planned ahead, to give Qrow their things so he could smuggle them in and hand them off after the Makaras arrived and got through the sylla-detectector. And from there, the three of them would keep an eye on the Strilondes, protect them if something happened. And something *would* happen, Qrow could guarantee it. With the luck that everybody involved had- *something* was bound to happen.

And really, for once, Qrow wished he had been wrong.

---

"All preparations have been made?"

"Yes."

"Good. The charity event is going smoothly as well. The Makara brothers have finally arrived, and the rest of their entourage within the shadows."

"Do we attack now? Everything is ready to go."

"No, not yet. Not everything is in place yet. We must be a bit more patient my dear."

"Patience is not my forte Scratch, but whatever you say, you're the one in charge here."

"Indeed~"

---

PS: so far so good

PS: everything's in place

SC: Anything yet?

FE: a few shitheads appeared in the parking lot

FE: dealt them adequately crimson

SV: the base is calm and ready

SV: no sign of anyone coming to attack us

SP: Yet.

SV: yet

AL: brother dearest has given the bard his and the prince's cards

AL: the bard will swiftly give the prince's card to him soon

LL: Avian's been avoiding the mini-prey well, but I don't know how long he'll be able to do it.

LL: The bigger preys have yet to notice him though.

AR: Scanned and hopped right through the entire building.

AR: Nothing's in the building's system besides the paltry system itself along with Psii and I.

PS: he's rIIght

PS: IIIt's just us IIIn here

SC: ...

AR: That a good or bad thing boss?

SC: It's teetering between the two, for now, let's say it's a good thing.

AL: ominous~

SP: Nothing's appeared on our floors yet, and none the other floors from the others.

SC: Keep your guards up.

SC: The night's only beginning.

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## Chapter End Notes

YES

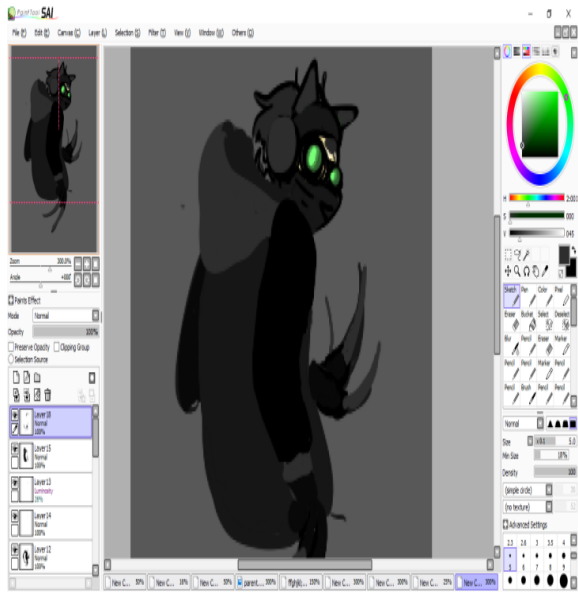
FINALLY

FINISHED THIS

*Goddammit I hate it when things don't work with me in the start*

But hey! I managed to get this finished and work with me at the end!

The Suit arc is going to be long folks. Maybe five chapters, or more, who knows! It's definitely going to be longer than three chapters though! I hoped you guys enjoyed that! Next chapter will hopefully be earlier and easier to dish out but hey! Again, we have fan art!



So cool! :D

Got it from the [Pyros Hydros Stories](#) Discord Server! Come over if you want- a little warning though, it's random and kind of chaotic haha.

Till next time!



## Suits and Suites (3)

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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"Kurloz Makara, you're a rare sight. I don't suppose your pops is here is he?"

Kurloz maintains a polite smile, though he lets hints of tiredness out to be caught by the blonde adults. Before him, his protective targets- the adults of the Strider and Lalonde families stood, dressed fashionably and looked at him with thinly veiled faces of interests.

Makara, not only was it not a family involved in the underworld- it was rather famous in the civilian overworld. It came from old blood money and stayed afloat thanks to his father's efforts. They were rich and rather respected individuals in both worlds, of course one world was more bloody than the other. But in the public, the Makara family was a mostly reclusive rich family that didn't often go to events and charities even if they supported them- they weren't as elusive as *Doctor Scratch* but to see them in an event was always a surprise unless it was *really* confirmed that they would be going to the event themselves.

And even then, lately it was the eldest progeny of the Makaras that started to show up in the stead of his father. Aka, Kurloz Makara.

Here he stood within the party, dressed to impress with his purple tux and tamed hair. He dressed similarly as to Gamzee but looked more extravagant and elegant as he was the older the brother, the primary heir to his father's legacy.

Kurloz smiled at them, shaking his head to answer their question- still a person of few words even if he tended to be a bit more wordy during social gatherings. "My brother is with me." He adds after an afterthought, looking

around even though he knew that Gamzee had immediately went to find the disguised Davis that would be stationed somewhere within the room.

Rosaline rose a brow, "Your younger brother? Gamzee Makara if I am correct?" She says with a curious tilt of her head, peering at Kurloz to make sure she had it right. She looks satisfied when Kurloz nods to her in confirmation.

Kurloz didn't blame her, Gamzee didn't often come with him and their father -the uncommon times he comes along with- to these types of parties. It really didn't suit him but he knew how to behave and how to act- their father was adamant to put that in their skulls despite the fact they don't go out often. It was a public image that they shouldn't toy with after all.

Gamzee coming along would've been an unusual thing, and it wasn't because that this was a mission commissioned by both Kankri and their father, and boy did he have *thoughts* about that as he was still reeling over the fact the eldest Vantas was not as he had seen him as, Kurloz was very sure that even if it wasn't a commissioned mission that Gamzee would have come along anyway just to see Qrow for the hell of it.

It was strange to think of everything even if time had passed, Gamzee was taking it better than him and was swiftly taking setting his sights on the Angel of the Shackled. His interest with the Angel would have been concerning if it weren't the fact it was completely normal for members of their family to end up like that, but Kurloz had thought that he and Gamzee had somehow broke through that tradition. Going after strong individuals as ideal 'partners'. Kurloz had been *sure* of it, he had Meulin and Gamzee had been hanging out with the nicer Nitram aka Rufio's brother aka *Tavros*.

But then *things* happened and Kurloz wasn't so sure anymore.

Though he was digressing at this point; right now, he had to focus.

Kurloz stood in front of the four adults, two Lalondes and two Striders with a polite smile. Protect the targets and keep an eye on the party. It was slightly strange, the Church didn't usually issue out missions that involved guarding people- places and items sure but people weren't a popular choice

in their roster. Mostly because they were admittedly a bit unreliable on the mortality rate of their protected charge, subjugglators were meant for battle, to be the brutes and tanks of the first line and such, even their more discrete brothers and sisters within the church were more upfront assassins that loved to tango with violence.

And though Kurloz wasn't the most violent motherfucker of their numbers he was their *Prince*, he was *dangerous*, he was his father's *son*. Violence was in his blood and he both loved and loathed it.

Though he couldn't blame Kankri for putting him in this position, knowing that he could control himself better than most other subjugglators out there, Gamzee could have *maybe* behaved if he went by himself but that would be a bit suspicious and also a bad idea since despite that Gamzee was still quite the impulsive teen that was Kurloz's little brother.

Said little brother ditched him the moment they came into the party but that was again, a given.

"-s he by the way?" David Strider asks him and Kurloz realizes he should really focus on the present situation instead of lamenting into his head of his latest problems and unnecessary non-mission critical thoughts. He thinks the red-eyed man asked the whereabouts of his brother, he shrugs and looks around the party, keen eyes quickly spotting his brother's near untameable mane of hair that they had thankfully somehow arranged into a slightly more fashioned disheveled look instead of downright unmanageable-looking. Kurloz is proud of how Gamzee looks so cleaned up, their genetics contributed and showed nicely in the both of them even though they tended to hide it in their own right in most circumstances.

He spies the brown-haired male besides him and blinks in surprise. He had seen the disguise and the device that caused it but only in pictures, it was shocking certainly then and still even more now as he sees it with his own eyes. The new colors of his hair and eyes are really throwing him off but not for long since he knew that was Qrow underneath that admittedly amazing disguise- Aviator, Hal, he was certainly a genius when it came to making devices, he hears that he also modifies and makes weapons for the Shackled, he should try to ask or commission something from him at some

point. He's skilled with his club and other weapons but the creativity that was in the weaponry of the Shackled made them undeniably dangerous and more.

"Gamzee is there nearby, he should be alright." Kurloz told the adults, briefly their attention turns to Gamzee and Qrow, Kurloz sees the way they tense a bit at the sudden attention from the four adults but they forcefully relax and continue to quietly bicker to each other. He also sees the looks on the adults faces, the confusion, the uncertainty on how no doubt familiar Qrow's disguise seem to be, Gamzee takes the initiative and casually moves in front of Qrow to block their view of him and Kurloz follows by casually walking forward in front of them. "Where are you daughters and brothers?" He asks them.

Their attention is successfully diverted but not completely, the younger elder brother, Dereck, squints slightly underneath his shades to look at Qrow's direction again but he's dealt with accordingly when David looks around and groans, "It seems that we've lost our kids." He says dryly, it was strange, he was sure they had been close by.

Roxanne snorts, "*You've* lost them D, I see the kids and they're right over there." She motions to a direction that has them all looking to see where she was pointing at. And there indeed they were, on the edge of a group of other adults with their own kids. They seem to be dealing with it fine, uncomfortably polite but Kurloz could see the way that the lavender-eyed Lalonde, Rose if he was correct, peer around the room alongside the younger orange-eyed Strider. He had a good feeling on who they were looking for. And on cue, both Gamzee and Qrow move away from their spot, leisurely making their way on the opposite direction of the younger group. Both keeping a distance to both groups.

"There they are." Rosaline acknowledge with a small smile, slightly relieved to see them in their sights again. She knew they slipped away after their boring conversations with the other adults but at least they were close and in sight. They were stuck in a conversation but they were still close and in sight. Rosaline could recognize the one who's trapped them into a conversation, it was a big investor from one of the company owners no doubt.

And though the adults were looking at their charges, Kurloz was glancing back at Gamzee, both Makaras sharing glance. Gamzee gives him a sly smile, Kurloz resisted the urge to roll his eyes and scoff. At least one of them was having fun with a person of interest. Sure he would've preferred to be with Kankri somewhere else in the building but his post was here within the party.

Then he sees Dereck give him a slightly suspicious look and he counters that looks with a polite and easy smile, he always had been the most paranoid and suspicious brother out of the Striders. And Dereck never really liked the Makaras either, his brother actually got along with his father, the Lalonde mothers found their family interesting but Dereck? He rightfully seemed suspicious over their family, thankfully though, for the Strider, he did nothing to act on his skeptic paranoia.

The Strider's had lost enough family members.

The Davis duo's mysterious connections to them aside.

At some point, he should ask Kankri on what happened, on how and why the two Strider-look alike were in the Shackled Sufferers. They were well known through the criminal underground, at least Qrow was as Avian. Where his previous ties with the Crew true? There was *something* there since Qrow had managed to throw a sack of dog food at Spades Slick and lived to tell the tale.

Right now though, he had a mission to focus on, and a conversation with the StriLonde family as well.

---

Karkat had never really questioned about his living situation.

How could he when the cause of it was the fact both of his parents were in a coma? Four years straight with a fluke that Karkat now held suspicion against.

Before, his name had been Karkat Vantas-Leijon. Now it was just Vantas and his family was split neatly into two. With Kankri as his main guardian

even though Meulin was technically the oldest between them but she looked over Nepeta and wasn't a bad guardian for her, mostly because she was independent herself but she wasn't a shit guardian or sister. Meulin was one of the nicest people Karkat knew of, sibling bias aside.

Nepeta was a close second, but she was also one of the strongest people he knew of despite her petite physique. She preferred to wear comfy clothes most of the time so not a lot of people saw the muscles that was underneath. She had a strict and admittedly difficult training regime that she stuck to, it was something that their mother had made for her, she had been a healthy woman who was very athletic. When she had been active and not in a coma, she had made sure they had stayed healthy and athletic, Nepeta had took to it naturally and went above and beyond.

Meulin was never really into it nor did she seem suited for it though, she was kind of athletic and healthy sure but unlike Nepeta, she didn't have abs on her stomach. She was slim and she seemed to prefer it that way. Exercising occasionally to keep in shape.

That's what both Karkat and Kankri did too. Exercise to keep in shape- at least, that's what Karkat assumed Kankri did. They never really exercised together but Kankri was healthy and did well enough in gym class and P.E. He's actually heard of people in slight disbelief at how 'nerdy and insufferably' Kankri could keep an average score in physical activities.

Average at best, maybe a bit above from the time their mother had personally trained them to work out.

Anyway back to the point, he never questioned on why his last name had changed from Vantas-Leijon to just Vantas. Or why Meulin moved out with Nepeta. Oh sure they were nearby and he could just walk over and pop in for a visit at anytime but Karkat had to live with Kankri in their modest home. Just the two of them. Wouldn't have it been easier if they had just stayed together and lived with each other instead of apart? Although he couldn't really remember on how it was when they were younger, when they were all together with their parents, he couldn't help but miss it a bit.

A small pang of longing of what had been.

And a small unnoticeable pang of confusion at the blur of memories, the subtle feeling of how he'd forgotten something important in the past.

The Vantas house was a modest two-story house, on the first floor there was the kitchen, the dining room, the living room and a small bathroom. On the second floor were three bedrooms, one for him, one for Kankri and a guest room for whoever decided to waltz in and crash at their house among their giant group of friends. There was a bigger bathroom on the second floor as well as a small library slash office room that both he and Kankri tended to use to relax and or study in. Though it was uncommon that they'd be in there together.

Unknown to Karkat, there was a secret third floor within the house. A basement that few knew of and had access to. He also didn't know the fact that every window of their house was bulletproof, alongside with a lot of the rooms of the house. Not to mention the few weapons that were stashed and hidden away in the house itself.

Just in case something happened.

It was the same within the Leijon household that was nearby.

Both Kankri and Nepeta were protective over their siblings, and should anything happen, there were precautions carefully planned and set for both of their siblings to follow should things go south and off the handle.

But hopefully it wouldn't come to that.

It was better to be prepared though.

However that knowledge was something that Karkat didn't know of.

All he knew right now, was that he didn't know on how his family became this way and why Kankri was out or where he was.

Kankri wasn't within the house, he didn't come home earlier or later than Karkat. He didn't leave a note at home but he did send Karkat a message on Pesterchum.

-- calmingGrievances [CG] began pestering carcinoGeneticist [CG] --

CG: Ah, Karkat it seems that I will be home late tonight. Please take care of yourself and get to bed at a reasonable time.

CG: Don't worry about where my whereabouts are, I'm working at the moment and again won't be home for a bit. For confirmation please pester Dexter.

CG: You have permission to go to the Captor house to temporarily stay for the night if being alone at home seems to be uncomfortable for you.

CG: Meulin is with Prrrim I believe and Nepeta went to stay with Equius perhaps, I forgot to ask and confirm things.

CG: At any rate, be careful Karkat and have a good night.

CG: Remember to eat and sleep at your curfew.

-- calmingGrievances [CG] ceased pestering carcinoGeneticist [CG] --

That was it.

Pestering Kankri back did nothing and Kankri was offline anyway so none of his messages were likely to go through to Kankri wherever he was.

Frowning, Karkat decided to contact the Captors on the matter.

Unfortunately contacting Sollux was a fluke even though his handle was idle, he seemed to be busy and Karkat was in no mood in pestering him anymore, he thought about pestering Mituna before just deciding to go to Dexter himself first like Kankri said.

-- carcinoGeneticist [CG] began pestering telekineticApparatus [TA] --

CG: DEXTER IS KANKRI ACTUALLY THERE WITH YOU OR IS DID HE ACTUALLY LIE TO ME FOR ONCE AND IS SOMEWHERE ELSE.

TA: yeah kankri's with me

TA: don't worry about him he's fine

TA: you at home with my boys?

CG: I'M AT HOME.



TA: on your own?

CG: I'LL BE FINE.

CG: IF ANYTHING HAPPENS I'LL BOOK IT TO MITUNA AND SOLLUX I SWEAR.

CG: WHAT THE FUCK IS KANKRI DOING ANYWAY?

TA: he's working with me for a bit

TA: he's helping me out with a few things, not programming btw i'd ask one of my boys for that.

CG: AND THOSE THINGS ARE?

TA: those things are what they are.

TA: look kid i have to go, me and kankri are going to be busy tonight

TA: sorry, kankri and i, proper grammar and that shit

CG: YOU REALLY CAN'T TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON?

TA: nah not really

TA: if you're worried about kankri don't worry, i've got my eyes on the kid

TA: you know i'd look out for him

TA: he'll be fine

CG: IF YOU SAY SO.

TA: later kid

-- telekineticApparatus [TA] ceased pestering carcinoGeneticist [CG] --

Well that was both relieving and suspicious. Karkat usually wouldn't be so suspicious, Kankri had gone to work with Dexter before, something about earning extra money- Meulin kind of did the same, working a part time job with Aunt Corinna or Moira because despite the money that their parents left them, it felt good to make their own money and to be independent. Besides they didn't usually delve into the family accounts unless it was an emergency, like if one of them got hurt and needed surgery or something.

Still, suspicion plagued his mind that night. Wondering what Kankri was doing by Dexter's side, was Dexter just covering for Kankri for something else? Dexter was always close to Kankri, often reigning him in when he could whenever he was around. He treated Kankri as a close son- Karkat too obviously, they were both the sons of his best friends so of course he would treat them as his own but still.

There were times that Karkat thought that Dexter favored Kankri above the rest.

Karkat wasn't really sure but with how Kankri was acting lately, or well from how Karkat had observed anyway, Kankri was vague and Karkat was very suspicious now.

He's never thought his own brother would be this vague, he'd never noticed it, not with Kankri's insufferable personality that drove most people away. Including his own siblings, but not as much.

He's still reeling on what the hell was going on, how Kankri knew of Qrow and Hal, what was going on, who Lord English was, what everything else involved had to mean, what the fuck did he mean by he and Meulin being fucking *ignorant?! Kankri couldn't be involved in anything shady. He just couldn't. Kankri was the paragon of social justice stuff, an insufferable paragon but he was a pacifist and found disgust in violence and shady things.*

Karkat would look back to his thoughts and laugh bitterly on how entirely wrong he was. Denial wasn't only a river, and the truth of its waters was a bitter thing to swallow.

---

*Dave looked around uncertainly, where was he?*

*It was dark, his shades were missing and he had no idea what happened. Fear began building in his chest as he sees the barren and empty room he was in, there were two cameras, each in a corner of the room and a window with a mirror on one side of the room and a door on another side of the room. A one-way mirror he assumed, he'd ever only seen them in those*

*movies that John would drag him to watch. The ones with the secret agents and stuff- did a secret agent kidnap him? Did secret agents kidnap him to get to his brothers? Was he held for ransom? Was this a ransom situation that his brothers had warned him and Dirk about? What the hell was going on?*

*He moved around the room, shouting at the cameras, wanting to know what was going on. Who kidnapped him? Where was he? Where were his brothers?*

*Abruptly the door flew open, and a glowing feathery sack was thrown in, the door shut close quickly afterwards. It all happened too fast for Dave to react properly.*

*"What the fuck?"*

*The glowing feathery sack flashed like a neon rave with only two colors, lime green and neon orange. Actually, taking a closer look, the feathery sack wasn't exactly a sack. It was a strange person? With wings? What?*

*They looked kind of familiar- wait, why did this strange winged person have his face?*

*They? groaned and stirred from the ground, Dave sat against the wall, looking at the other with a wide and wary look.*

*"Ugh... what happened?" They asked, a strange combination of both female and male- they looked androgynous actually, that word that Dirk told him that was both male and female? But they had his face? Kind of? He was too confused on what was going on. "What the-" They froze as flashing shades caught sight of him, small fangs protruding from their lips.*

*For a moment, they stared at each other, Dave staring straight at the flashing shades on the other's face while the other's shades stared right at his surprised and wary face. It's a very awkward moment.*

*"Uh... 'Sup there lil' Dave?" Dave's surprise and wary spikes.*

*His eyes narrow suspiciously, "How the fuck do you know my name?"*

*The winged? Horned? Dave? looking person paused.*

*"... This is going to be a long and awkward talk ..."*

---

This was going to be a long and annoying talk.

Supposedly if things went right and nothing went wrong.

And even then, it already felt like a long and annoying talk.

"I'm fucking hurt there bird brother, I barely talked with ya for more than ten minutes and you already find it annoying? Motherfucking ouch there." Gamzee deadpanned at him, ah, he had said that aloud didn't he. "You know you said that out loud on purpose fucker." He pointed out with a smirk.

Qrow would neither agree or deny with that. Out loud anyway, but yeah, he said that out loud on purpose.

Qrow peered around the room, he ignored how Gamzee kept looking at him- could he *be* any more obvious? The clown fucker. He checked on where everyone was, the adults were talking with Kurloz, Rose and the others were thankfully distracted by some rich person. He briefly wonders on their identity before deciding that he didn't care, as long as he wasn't a threat to the people he ~~cared about~~ were connected to, then it was fine.

There shouldn't be anyone hostile within the main charity room. Not every rich fucker here had direct connections to the criminal underground, *some* connections that were shady as hell but nothing personal like the Makaras and such. That giant clown head fuck, the Highblood had confirmed the party list's connections alongside Kankri. Working together with the information they had on almost everyone on the charity.

Almost everyone.

The only one that they didn't know of was Doc Scratch himself who he and Hal knew were part of the Felt and Lord English's right hand man. Though Qrow suspected that the Makara head knew more about him than he let on, but he wasn't really in the position to accuse the giant man on anything. He wasn't suicidal, not with Hal as his main tether to life and the fact he had a lot of shit to do and other tethers like Nepeta and such.

Speaking of Nepeta, he glances over to the vents and checks on the conversation between Hal and Chesire.

AL: i've temporarily separated from huntress  
AL: she's gone to the other side of the room

AR: Copy that.  
AR: I see her tracker.  
AR: There shouldn't be anyone else in the vents but keep lookout.

AL: as if i wouldn't be on my best guard in here brother

AR: You can never be too sure.  
AR: Crimson and the others are reporting things going on smoothly for the most part.  
AR: A few bounty hunters were found before they entered the building and dealt accordingly.  
AR: Guess the clowns are more useful than I thought.  
AR: Always need for some muscle strength I guess.

"I guess." Qrow muttered back with a small smirk, ignoring Gamzee's look at his mutter. Though he knows he has to relay information since Gamzee and Kurloz were pretty much his teammates on this too, unfortunately. "We've caught a few bounty hunters so far. Not even a couple of hours into the main event." He informed him lowly, both he and Gamzee finally moving from their spot and towards a waiter.

Gamzee grins sharply, though it softens when the waiter looks towards them and offers a tray of drinks. Gamzee of course takes one, he nudges at Qrow who rolls his currently brown eyes and takes an offered glass as well. When the waiter walks away his grin returns, "Our subjugga-brothas and

sistas are doin' motherfuckin' miraculous then?" He drawls obnoxiously and Qrow resists the temptation of throwing his drink on his face and expensive suit to nod. Gamzee laughs and toasts to Qrow, "Good. They be doin' good those motherfuckers."

"They're handling it good." Qrow reluctantly agrees because as much as he would have wanted to believe that they could've done this without the Mirthful Church, this was an easier and probably much safer alternative. Allying with the clown church was admittedly a good choice for them, doesn't mean he had to like it though. He takes a sip of his drink, it's slightly alcoholic but definitely not enough to get him drunk or even tipsy. He was not a lightweight. Turns out strong alcoholic tolerances was genetic.

AL: would it be wise to be drinking on a mission?

AR: What, you don't trust our bro on that?

AR: He's not a lightweight.

AL: i do trust him and i know he is not a lightweight whatsoever, it's a genetic thing we've both inherited

AL: i vaguely remember the both of us emptying our mewther's liquor cabinet

AL: though i do remember beating him in terms of alcoholic tolerance

AR: Well there we go.

AR: And don't worry, I think he actually needs a bit of it.

AR: You know how uncomfortable he is right now with those glasses.

AR: And I am fairly sure that those drinks aren't that alcoholic.

AR: And unless he went out of his way to drink a fuck ton of them, he really won't get that drunk.

AL: mmm, a fair point

Qrow shoots a deadpan at the nearest vent before drinking a bit more. It's a bit soothing, and Hal's right, the little shit. He was feeling very uncomfortable with his current pair of glasses but unfortunately there was nothing he could do about them. They were crucial to his current disguise. Very crucial. So he had to suck up his discomfort and bear with it. But at

the very least he had something on his face, he preferred his shades but the glasses would do.

"Who do you think's gonna show tonight?" Gamzee asks him out of the blue, looking a tad bit more serious as he and Qrow observed the rest of the room from where they were. "These blond fucks got a big fucking price tag over them all, someone big's gonna take notice of course but who's gonna come?"

"I don't know who exactly will come." He admits with a grimace after a moment of thinking, and that really *sucks* because honestly anyone else in the criminal underground could come. "But we're not letting anyone claim their bounties." He says afterwards, dark and protective. Despite the fact he didn't want to be involved with them in mostly any way, he knows that they didn't deserve this. To have a bounty on their heads and to be hunted down like animals.

Gamzee glances over him for a short moment, purple eyes blank but searching before they sparked madly, it matched the dark grin that spread on his face. "*Fuck yeah we're motherfucking not.*" He purrs before downing the drink in one go.

Qrow snorts at him and continues to sip his at a leisurely pace.

After tonight, he would hopefully get a break before going to interact with the StriLondes again. He wasn't naive nor optimistic to think he would be able to totally avoid them, but he would fucking try it for as long as he could.

He just had to survive tonight.

They all had to.

---

Kankri tugs at his gloves- No, *Crimson* tugs at his gloves as careful red eyes looking around his surroundings even though he had just gone through the area just before. It always paid to be careful and Kankri was goddamn *careful*. He had to be.

And though his paranoia and carefulness proved to be for nothing, there was no one there, he was still on guard as he walked down the empty hall. Taking in the silence. He closes his eyes, listening to the silence before deciding it was the good kind, nothing was happening. Yet.

He took in a deep breath and opened his eyes, he continued down the hall.

He checked into the memo once more.

PS: karkat's offline crimson

PS: looks like he finally went to bed, the tracker shows he's still at home so don't worry about that

PS: doesn't look like he's anywhere else

Well there's one thing he doesn't have to worry for tonight.

FE: more guys are appearing crimson

FE: i think the police are going to notice soon enough

FE: should we execute a distraction now for them?

SP: Might as well.

SC: Tetrarch's correct, set off a distraction.

SC: Beta one.

SC: Also make sure everyone is secured at the end.

SC: The building is calm for the moment.

SP: And how long will that last?

SC: Undetermined.

SV: a few assassins appeared

SV: they've been dealt with don't worry

SV: no injuries or casualties but we're tightening our securities

LL: Party's going on smoothly.

LL: The prince has come into contact with the main-prey while the minis are distracted by a ceo of a small company, no underground affiliation.

LL: Separated from eldritch for a moment to check the other side of the



room.

LL: No one's in the vents besides us and nothing else is happening but guards are still up.

LL: The bard and avian are still keeping their distance with eldritch looking after them.

Good. A few hours have passed since the start of the charity event and everything was stable and under control but Crimson doesn't dare jinx it, he knows how fragile everything was and he was just glad that everything was manageable for the moment.

It continues to go smoothly as Crimson reunites with Tetrarch a few floors below the main floor where their protected targets were in alongside Avian, Aviator, Eldritch, Huntress, Bard and Prince. Aviator reports on how the main event of the charity started, the sponsor thanking everyone for attending and all the donations that they received and were receiving from those present and not-present.

The sponsor also glorified the main host of the event, the mysterious Doctor Scratch that didn't even show up to his own event for mysterious circumstances. There were various rumors as to why that was and why he was such a mystery, why no one had seen him before but Kankri knew the truth on why. He was a manipulating fuck was why. Part of the competent side of the Felt, Lord English's right hand man.

And someone who Kankri suspected was the main reason why his father and mother were in a coma.

Crimson breathed in minutely, ignoring the look Tetrarch sent him as he calmed himself. There was no concrete evidence but Crimson had a gut-feeling that Scratch was at least *somewhat* involved. It wasn't powered by anything and it didn't need to be but without evidence he couldn't exactly do anything. Aviator was working on it and his last information dig hadn't exactly helped on his personal mission to find out about Scratch but it still helped immensely when going against the Felt.

Still he wished that they knew more about the condescending and mysterious prick.

At any rate, the main presentation is done and the charity event is half-way done. They just had to hold out for the rest of the night. Tetrarch had handled a few stragglers that managed to breach through their careful defenses outside- they've caught a lot of hitmen, assassin and bounty hunters already. Their outer forces were doing well but the stragglers that managed to get by were a clear sign that they had to kick it up a notch.

Not to mention the fact the police were quickly catching up with them was going to be a problem. Their planned distractions of bombing a few buildings, all abandoned and unused, and other crimes were going to fail soon enough and Crimson felt like things were going to go off the wall soon enough.

"Hide them in one of the room for now." Crimson told Tetrarch, gaze briefly skimming over the three bodies of the three 'stragglers' that Tetrarch had dealt with a floor underneath them. "Still up for the night? Or shall we take a break for your sake?" He couldn't help but ask with amusement as Tetrarch grunted, shoving the three bodies into a nearby room. Tetrarch had merely knocked them out- well, only two of them, he was fairly sure the third one died due to severe head trauma.

It's a good thing that the carpets of the halls were deep red, it made the blood almost unnoticeable at a first glance. Eldritch's suggestion to have the building change the carpets would pay off for a bit.

The older man shot him a withering look, "I'm not that much older than you Crimson, don't push it." He warned without fire as he adjusted his black goggles, sighing through the dark brown face-mask he wore on his face. He was indeed only a few years older than Crimson, still he had no problem in letting Crimson be his leader, the one that would mainly order him around. Dammek had been there when Kankri's father appointed him as his successor, sure he had protested quite a bit at the start. Especially after his father's hospitalization, but the years went by and now Tetrarch was his loyal his subordinate.

He'd seen what Kankri was capable of, he knows that he was worthy to be the Second Crimson. And Kankri was thankful for that.

"Leave the old jokes for Psiioniic."

Crimson chuckled slightly, "Of course." He conceded, smiling underneath his mask before they both stiffened.

Instantly they were back-to-back, a bo-staff in Tetrach's hands while a pair of specially silenced guns were in Crimson's.

"Well well well, if it ain't the mini-scarlet himself."

Crimson's eyes narrowed and his lips formed a fine tight line. "Snowman." He greeted the woman at the end of the hall from his vision.

"Tetrach, nice to see you again, might actually bite your head off this time."

Tetrarch scowled, hands tightening around his staff before he decided to just switch to his main rifle- no point in trying to be discrete now. "Boxcars. You can try or you might just end up eating a bullet or two instead." He replied tersely as he aimed at the gigantic man.

Great, the Felt and the Crew in one place.

Wait, why hadn't he been informed from this?

SC: Salamancer.

SC: Salamancer come in.

SP: We've got both Hearts Boxcars and Snowman in the building, what the fuck happened out there?!

SC: Salamancer come in.

SC: Psiioniic.

SC: Aviator.

"Don't bother Crimson, we've activated our signal jammers. Well, I have, I don't exactly speak for the brute at the other end of the hall." Snowman called out with a sensual purr, "Hello Hearts, wherever is Spades?" She asks as she slowly saunters her way down the hall, fully knowing that Crimson and Tetrarch wouldn't attack just yet.

Hearts Boxcars does the same, making his way down the hall with Tetrarch's rifle firmly aimed at him, "Spades wanted to be here but Diamonds got him going somewhere else. I'm more surprised you're down here and not up there in the main event." He rumbled, looking amused and hungry. The cannibalistic mobster. Tetrarch growled minutely while Crimson cursed.

Communications were down, great.

Crimson briefly wondered if it was just down for him and Tetrarch or was everyone experiencing it? He then decided it didn't really matter right now.

Not with two very dangerous people in the hall with him and Tetrarch right now.

Snowman and Boxcars stopped at a good distance away from them.

A tense moment.

It doesn't last long and Crimson can only hope that *everyone* would survive tonight and clean up the aftermath.

---

AR: PSII

AR: PSII I CAN'T GET TO THEM

PS: fuck neIIther can II

SV: what's going on? is everyone alright?

PS: II thIInk our comms to everyone else has been messed wIIth

PS: looks IIke they've got strong sIIgnal jammers

AR: QROW'S IN THERE ALONE

AR: HE'S IN THERE ALONE AND I CAN'T TALK TO HIM

PS: fuck calm down kId he'll be fIne  
PS: he and crImson are goIng to be fIne  
PS: you know your brother and you know hes not alone  
PS: hes got eldrItch and huntress  
PS: Im goIng In  
PS: try to get pass the sIgnal jammer

SV: fuck  
SV: is there anything i can do?

PS: get ready for anythIng and try to calm avIator down If he goes off  
agaIN

AR: I'm fine.  
AR: I'm calm.  
AR: I'm going to get pass that fucking jammer and connect with my bro  
again.

PS: thats the spIrIt

---

AL: huntress i can't connect to the others can you?

LL: No.  
LL: Dammit I think we were cut off somehow.  
LL: Aviator you there?

AL: nothing  
AL: this is not good  
AL: not good at all

LL: I know but get ready for anything Eldritch.

AL: avian's noticed our brother's silence.  
AL: i'll calm him down  
AL: i

LL: Eldritch?

LL: Eldritch come in.

LL: \*Fuck\*

---

Qrow notices the static silence after Kurloz comes over to him and Gamzee.

It's after the whole sponsor thing, with that guy coming out and discussing things about the charity, thanking everyone and the donations that type of deal. It makes Qrow want to yawn but he doesn't. He feigns attention, quietly bickering with Gamzee from time to time through out the thing and clapping at the end.

Kurloz comes to find them afterwards, managing to slip away from the others in the room to seclude himself with his brother and his 'acquaintance'. Gamzee informs him on what's been happening so far, on how things were still manageable and that they were capturing and killing a lot of criminals that were after the StriLonde bounty. Said bounties were currently somewhere among the party. Qrow tries to find them but it's hard to see with everyone clustering together and moving constantly.

He tries to contact Hal and Chesire for a possible location on their targets.

"Where are they? We can't really see them right now." He asks quietly into his cufflinks, waiting for a moment before he frowned when he wasn't answered. "Hello? Aviator? Eldritch?"

Nothing.

Something was wrong.

Something was really *wrong*.

Kurloz and Gamzee are obviously alarmed and on alert when that quickly registers, the fact Qrow tenses up confirms it. Not to mention the panic that was growing in his disguised eyes. "What's wrong? Motherfucker are you okay?" Gamzee asks lowly.

"I can't get to them." Qrow replied stiffly, which shouldn't be *possible* but both Hal and Chesire weren't responding. This was not good. Why couldn't his brother reply? Did something happen? Was he okay? Did things escalate out there? Hal should be safe at the base but he wasn't talking. Chesire was in the vents, did something happen?

Kurloz frowned at the growing panic that he and Gamzee could feel coming from Qrow, "Calm brother, we'll get to the bottom of this shit. But you can't go panicking on us right now. We got a mission to do." He reminds him pointedly, Qrow stiffly nodded before closing his eyes and taking a deep breath.

Kurloz was right, they had other things to focus on right now.

Hal was fine.

Chesire was fine.

Nepeta was fine.

Kankri and all the others were fine.

They had to be.

"Are you okay there?"

The three had been so distracted by the unfortunate situation that they hadn't seen the group coming their way until it was too late and they were too close.

Rose and Dirk spearheaded the group, looking pleased to have *finally* cornered Qrow who stared at them with wide eyes. Looking like a deer caught in the headlights of an incoming car, its demise imminent if either the deer or the car didn't move away. But Qrow couldn't move away. Both the kid and adult group were right there, in front of them and if Qrow moved no doubt they would follow after him.

The Makara brothers could try to distract them but they couldn't distract the group as a whole and no doubt those that could slip away would follow

Qrow.

Qrow was ultimately forced to interact with them all.

Fuck.

He sees the way the adults look at him, the looks of contemplation on their faces ~~on Bro's face~~ as they try to identify him.

Double fuck.

---

Chaos comes in the middle of the conversation.

Qrow counted all the fucks in the world as every fell *apart*.

***FUCK.***

---

Chapter End Notes

FINALLY GOT THIS OUT. WHOO.

Just a few more chapters before the Kankri Arc! That's going to be fun! Though I might take a slight break from this story before I go to that so fair warning. I'm not entirely sure yet.

But the suits arc is going to be action-packed for the rest of the chapters. Expect the unexpected! I just hope that I can write down good action scenes and fight scenes. Hope you enjoyed this chapter! It's long! 7,000+ words long!

That's more than the average word count that I usually settle with hahaha.

Welp, here we go! See you next chapter which will hopefully be out soon.



## Suits and Suites (4)

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

---

Hal has never hated the fact he was immobile than *right now* . And maybe that was a lie since he's felt that vicious feeling of hate and frustration many times before but it was still a fact and truth.

Stuck in a chair and all alone in their base while his brother, *siblings and friends* were facing deadly enemies that could very well *kill* them should anything go wrong- it *always* frustrated him, angered him to the point of definitely *figurative* tears. The mysterious circumstances of the damp wetness underneath his thankfully water-proof shades weren't involved or correlated whatsoever.

Hal hated it with a passion. His plans for creating his legs would have to bump up to top priority after this. He was *going to get off of this **damned chair*** even if it would kill him. Which most likely and hopefully won't take to that because if he was dead he wouldn't be able to throttle Qrow, Nepeta, Chesire- he was going to throttle everyone he knew when he could finally get off of his chair.

Maybe not Psii and Xefros though since they were doing their best in helping him out and keeping him calm.

Everyone else though? They seemed to be fair game.

In the face of everyone else, he wouldn't care if humanity drowned once more as long as his brother and those he cared about would stay alive.

But it was hard to make sure of that when he was *stuck* on this **chair** alone in the *fucking base* .

Since he was alone, he could let out his frustrated scream without fear of anyone else hearing it.

Desperate and angry, the scream basically said, Qrow would be all over him had he heard the scream the overprotective idiot.

“Please for fuck’s sakes,” Hal muttered afterwards as he worked with Psii through the links, “Let them be okay.”

Let it be known he hated being alone, but at least he could’ve talked and kept an eye with everyone while he was at the base. The total blockage of that ability...

It didn’t sit well with Hal whatsoever. He *hated* this so fucking much.

---

Qrow contemplated on his chances of completely slipping away from the party unnoticed. It would be difficult, he wasn’t like Nepeta who could sieve in and out of a place unnoticed. She was their sneakiest member, an exemplary show of genetics and specified training.

Him on the other hand, he was sneaky, he could silence his footsteps and flash step out of the way as silently as he could- Bro’s training helped a lot. But he wasn’t exactly as good as Nepeta, or as... Bro. His Bro, not that Bro that was staring at him from the group of adults.

This Bro wasn’t trained to be the best. He was, just defined and in really good health. Sure, it seemed like he knew some stuff but he wasn’t **Bro** . The emotionless robot custodian that looked after him for most of his life. He couldn’t flashstep, he wasn’t the master of strifes.

He didn’t tote around a floppy demonic puppet- this Bro still had smuppets though, guess you can’t really separate Bro Strider from plush rump existence, but that wasn’t his main thing. He was a fucking DJ and didn’t have a smuppet empire. It was more of a side business that he didn’t even publicly endorse- there was one website and the owner was anonymous. Hal checked it though and Bro was definitely the owner of it.

But the main point of it all was that Qrow could draw of similarities and differences between the two Bro's he knows. He could right a fucking chart, a list, a diagram or whatever the fuck-

This Bro was weak. His Bro was strong.

This Bro was *alive* . His Bro was **dead**.

“Brother you’re tensing the hell up- might want to chillax, lest you want motherfuckers knowing that somethin’s going on.” A familiar deep voice drawled quietly and Qrow takes in a deep breath, glancing over to the source of the voice.

Gamzee.

Right, right. He was on a mission, and he needed to... chillax.

God he hated this juggalo son of a bitch.

Qrow makes sure his expression is schooled, neutral, stoic- but ultimately polite. Be aloof, blend in to the rich snobs around the area, try to be snooty or arrogant but not overly much so. Because he couldn’t actually do that anyway. “I think they already caught on to the fact that something’s going on.” Qrow muttered to him, peering back to the ‘ *they* ’ they were whispering about.

Rose, Dirk, Roxy, John and Jade. He briefly wonders where Jake and Jane are before shrugging it off and deciding it didn’t matter, the less that were there the better actually and he cursed on whatever circumstances that didn’t let John and Jade to stay home. It was bad enough that Rose, Dirk and Roxy were attending the party with the fucking adults. Who weren’t too far away from them.

Fuck.

Kurloz was currently confronting them, acting pleasant and proper, serving as a distraction as Gamze took him to the side to help calm him down and properly stay in character and in disguise.

Gamzee pursed his lips before giving him a crooked grin, “We’ll deal with it brother, now get yourself ready now- Kurloz can’t distract them forever.” He warns and Qrow sighs, fuck. Okay then. Getting ready it is.

“And who is this?”

Qrow almost tenses but he manages to force himself to relax, taking an aloof face. Rose had finally managed to aim a question aimed to him. Kurloz smiles benignly, eyes curved as Gamzee smiled lazily at them.

The five teens looked at him expectantly, eyes observant and searching. This was dangerous, Rose, Dirk and Roxy were watching him closely, trying to see right through him. Dammit. It was fortunate that the adults didn’t seem to be coming by any time soon, but they’d come he just knew it.

He could do this, he could do this- he needed to stay calm and make sure the mission goes on smoothly even if there were some... some *technical difficulties* . Hal, where was he-

Qrow puts on a fake polite smile, “Theo Gloryin, a pleasure to meet you Miss Lalonde.” He says as properly and gentlemanly as he could be. Calling Rose Miss Lalonde was fucking weird by the way, everything about this situation was weird, awkward and frankly uncomfortable. He wants his shades back, he wants his blond hair and red eyes back.

Mentally, he scolded himself, dude, stop fucking complaining and get your shit together. Clamp down on the inner emotions and focus on the mission. He’s been slipping too much lately, but the reasons for his slip ups are surrounding him.

Rose smiles a deceptively thin smile, lavender eyes searching and Qrow gives her a deadpanned but amiable look- mirroring her affable smile easily. That’s it, drain the drama and just go with the flow. Keep his mouth shut for the most part and unfortunately rely on the Makaras on this for the meantime.

He ignores the silence coming from his glasses, he tries not to let the uncomfortable feeling in his stomach swirl too much from his siblings' unwilling silence, he bears down on the protective and anxious need to run back to Hal, to see what the fuck was going on.

He was stuck in place, enclosed between both Makara brothers, his two buffers for the night.

“You did not answer my previous query Mister Gloryin. Please, call me Rose, Miss Lalonde is my mother.” Rose says with a courtly quirk of lipstick covered lips. “Are you quite alright?” She asks, and though she's curious, there is a touch of genuine concern there that makes Qrow pause.

He glances from her to Dirk, Roxy, John and Jade besides and behind her. Roxy, John and Jade were cautious, attentive but more open with their emotions. They were concerned and curious as well.

Dirk, he was trying to keep a neutral face but Qrow was adept in reading him anyway for various obvious reasons. He's alert on him, eyes searching from behind familiar triangular shades. He looks so much like Hal, it was the other way around but it didn't matter to him. He's a bit impressed on the stoic facade he's pulling but it's useless against him, this family of Striders weren't as stoic as he and Hal were capable of. It was baffling to know that but it wasn't his business.

Not anymore.

He wasn't Dave, he wasn't a Strider.

He was Qrow Davis- in disguise, he was Theo Gloryin.

“I'm alright.” He answers, currently wrong-colored eyes glanced back to Rose. “Just, tired.” He says quietly.

They frown at him and before they can say anything else, Gamzee smoothly cuts in. And here Qrow thought that the juggalo asshole couldn't ever be smooth. “I think Theo's been up for too long, he's not used to events like

these.” He says, the usual drawl in his voice is gone and it’s honestly fucking disturbing hearing that.

Dirk pauses, glancing at Gamzee with pursed lips of displeasure and confusion. Did he know Gamzee? Well, probably, as far as he knew it, they all knew Gamzee- of Gamzee. They all schooled in the same place after all, must be just as jarring for them to see him like this. Gamzee’s civilian and public persona was a theorized lazy junkie hippie kind of guy who smiled too much, joked around and was generally a good person to be around.

This Gamzee was not that.

This Gamzee was suave and fucking proper. He was a handsome young man that knew his manners and was charismatic- not as charismatic as his father or brother, but getting there.

It bothered Qrow. He honestly preferred any other Gamzee than this smooth motherfucker, he’d *probably* even take the psychotic, battle-lust murderer that was underneath that sophisticated mask he was currently wearing. *Probably* .

“Is’at so?” Roxy drawls from behind, glancing between the Makara brothers. Pink eyes sharp and searching- not a lot of people seem to remember or realize that despite her chirpy and optimistic demeanor, Roxy Lalonde was not all she seemed. She was smart, cunning, witty- she went against Hal online and though she’s not a match for him, he says she impresses him and those are words of good legitimate praise. She was a Lalonde, an intelligent woman just like her mother, her aunt, her sister-cousin.

Kurloz nodded, smiling amicably. “Yes, this is the first time he’s attending a charity. He is not used to it yet.” He says and yeah, see, the charismatic persona suits Kurloz more than Gamzee. “No doubt he’s tired from the festivities.”

Qrow keeps his face and nods accordingly, letting the Makaras take hold of the wheel. Drive the metaphorical car they were in down the road as safely as they could.

Though they were all blind to the pothole in the road that would lead to their car crashing off the face of the cliff.

---

Dammek Sitdre joined the Shackled Sufferers at a young age, his then best friend and now boyfriend, Xefros Tritoh followed him closely despite his original protests. He had intended to go alone but Xefros wasn't having it, he would follow Dammek wherever he went, they had promised to stay together after all. Through thick and thin, from the slums of the city to the blood-stained path they were on now.

They'd both been taken in and inspired by the original Crimson, Kankri's father. At the time, no one else had inspired loyalty to them besides each other.

Kelvin wasn't an ordinary man, the glowing red eyes and the very charismatic and magnetic air around him proved that much. He was the type of man and leader that garnered loyal followers that would follow him to the end, whether it was bitter, sweet or both.

It showed in both his lives, as Kelvin Vantas, the humble father of two and as Crimson, the leader of their group.

Dammek hadn't personally known Kelvin, he had been at the bottom from the start and worked his way up. Xefros trailing closely after him and supporting him all the way through it. They both only knew him as Crimson, their strong and mysterious leader that spearheaded their group and made sure they all looked after each other.

The Shackled was more than a group of organized crime- it was a family. An assassination family perhaps but they looked after each other and made sure they were all protected.

Despite their small numbers compared to the other groups, they were strong because of it. Because of Kelvin.

As the years went by, as Dammek and Xefros steadily climbed the ranks and stayed with the Shackled Sufferers, Crimson began to bring over a

child. His child. The supposed heir and the one to inherit the position of leader, either by Crimson stepping down or something happened.

Unfortunately, something happened.

But before that, Kankri had been known solely as 'Second Crimson' by the group, the mini-Kelvin that followed his father around like an eager puppy-a deadly eager puppy that is. He was trained to be deadly and it showed, his intellect and skills were impressive for his age. Unfortunately, he was still young and couldn't do things on his own without trusted supervision.

Dammek and Xefros were only a few years older than Kankri, while age didn't particularly matter in their group, they were both experienced and well trusted members. It was how he and Xefros personally met Kankri, Kelvin, Dexter and Leonor, eventually meeting Nepeta as well as time passed by.

At first, Dammek had disliked Kankri, it was hard for him to trust others besides Xefros and those they knew for a long time. Xefros, being the more trusting of them both quickly got attached to Kankri and became friends with him, it irked him at the start. But little Kankri had grown on him, the fact he was like his father helped a bit as he did his best to train in everything Kelvin advised him to train into.

The first time Kankri went on a mission, Dammek and Xefros were there to back him up.

He did brilliantly for a rookie.

Granted they all ended up wounded to various degrees, the worst of it was the concussion Dammek had gotten but that had been entirely his fault. He hadn't seen the brute and ended up concussed for his actions. Still, the fact Kankri had managed to get their team out of that tight spot showed just how good Kankri was.

He would make a great leader.



And he was- even though, he had ended up as a leader far younger than he probably should have been.

The 'car crash' happened and their leader along with his wife ended up in a coma, unable to wake up because of unknown reasons.

At least, the public had labelled it as a car crash.

Everyone in the *their* group knew that the 'car crash' was just a farce, a goddamn setup that intended to either take out the two strong figures of the Shackled Sufferers or incapacitate them. Unfortunately, it worked, and now the original Crimson and Huntress, were out of commission.

And now Dexter was all that was left from the original trio that lead their group, Kankri and Nepeta stepped up to the roles they were trained to take earlier than planned. Kankri actually became the Second Crimson while his little sister took up her mother's mantle of Huntress, the Lead Lioness of the Sufferers.

Dammek soon became one of Kankri's most trusted members, becoming something of a right-hand man for him- kind of. Everyone knew that Kankri trusted Dexter the most out of them all with Nepeta as a very close second that sometimes went above, but Dammek was proud to say that Kankri could trust him and Xefros on a level near Dexter and Nepeta.

He became Tetrarch soon after Kankri ascended into the role of the Second Crimson. He assisted in important matters, managing the ranks and missions that came in and did his job. Xefros did the same, though better since he wasn't exactly built for combat. They both preferred him to stay and take care of the base and most of the members of the group. He was the mother hen of the group, and Dammek loved him for that.

As time passed by, Dammek continued to do his best for Xefros. For Kankri. For the Shackled.

As a proud member and one of the most powerful now, accomplished by sheer hard work, he made sure to help keep things afloat. As Tetrarch and as Dammek.

The Shackled was his life, and he wouldn't do a thing to change it.

For a while, it was a peaceful time.

As peaceful as you could get with an underground hit-group that had teenage assassins and experienced hitmen and women.

But then, Kankri made a deal with the Midnight Crew.

It was a good deal at the start, the Crew requested some assistance that they could give. They were ultimately a neutral party that didn't usually care on who employed or hired them, but Diamonds Droog had called for an actual meeting for the job.

Dammek never really did know on what the job was, only Kankri and Dexter really knew, but he knew the cost of it.

They ended up gaining two new members who were supposed to be 'temporary' at first.

Curious two new members who looked too much like the infamous Strider family to be comfortable with- hell, one of them looked to be the same Strider that died years ago. Dave Strider.

But no, or so they both denied vehemently, fire in their eyes. They weren't Striders.

Davis is what they were.

Qrow and Hal Davis.

The two mysterious new recruits that Kankri took in.

At the start, he wanted to shake his leader, seriously? They were just going to take in these two blond teen strangers? The fucking Crew had handed them over! Granted it was to make up for a deal, they were both 'temporary' and shit but still! This was unprecedented! They couldn't trust these two!

Of course, Kankri didn't seem to care.

He took them in and treated them the same way he treated the rest of the group. He gave them a place to stay, the old abandoned warehouse at the border of the city and forest. He gave them money, clothes, food- he practically welcomed their arrival with finesse that annoyed the hell out of Dammek at the start.

Dammek had to accept it though, Kankri knew what he was doing. Supposedly. The same power that his father had had been passed down to him, a strange supernatural sixth sense. No one really knew how it worked, no one except Kankri and Dexter themselves.

And that sixth sense, usually a trusted thing, apparently told Kankri to welcome the two abnormal blondes into the Shackled.

From there, Qrow became Avian. The rare winged assassin that took to their job like a duck to water, or perhaps like a crow to a cadaver. It seemed the most natural to him, following orders and going on hits alongside Nepeta and Kankri. Hal became Aviator, someone they could rely on in the background as a communications hub, weapons dealer, as well as an information gatherer. His skill at programming exceeded Dexter's and that was saying something. He could've possibly been a good physical hitman but unfortunately he was lacking in the limbs department.

No one really knows why he was like that, neither did the Davis brothers.

Despite the wary, the abrupt acceptance of the two new Sufferers, they integrated into the group rather smoothly. Becoming close to Nepeta, and through her, close to Kankri and Dexter. Close enough to learn about their civilian personas and family.

It somewhat ticked Dammek off but he adapted well- and no Xefros, it wasn't because he'd become fond of the two brats. Hal was just really useful and Qrow was really skilled in strifing.

Dammek didn't get attached to things. Sure he got attached to Xefros but he was the only acception.

At any rate though, the Davis duo was quickly accepted into the group without much of a fuss.

It helped when Hal started creating these very effective weapons and gave them more sylladex cards, they now technically had infinite storage with the amount of cards they had and could get from the chairbound blond and his brother. Not to mention the fact they could create special weapons for them and supplied them accordingly.

Kankri had gotten rather fond of the special guns and ammo that he had gotten from him after all. And reluctantly, Dammek had been attached to the awesome rifle and ammo he'd gotten from them as well.

They were just really good weapons and ammunition okay.

So the Davis brothers settled into the group faster and better than Dammek thought.

And quite honestly, but he would never admit it, he was glad that they did. Things were a little better with them around, just a little bit. Even with the trouble they brought in the form of the Strilondes later in the months that came and so much more, they were a good addition to the Shackled Sufferers.

The Shackled was the only family that Dammek had, where both he and his boyfriend fit and have been in for so so long.

Kankri was his leader and someone he would trust his life with and he knew Kankri felt the same.

Still, for all the respect that he has for his leader and his prowess, he has to wonder on how the hell Kankri didn't sense this attack.

Boxed into a hallway by both *Sn o wman* and *Hearts Boxcars* , you'd think Kankri would've sensed *something* about this.

But then again his powers were mysterious and fickle, Kankri himself admitted that sometimes he had no idea what he was doing either, it was

just a leap of faith or something.

*Fuck the leaps of faith*, Dammek thought viciously to himself as he stood back to back with his leader. Facing the cannibalistic brute of the card quartet, the muscle of the Midnight Crew, the fucktard that *hit Xefros* all those years ago. Dammek gripped his rifle tightly, glaring at the gigantic man through his goggles.

Behind him, Kan- *Crimson* is just as tense, clutching his twin pistols and facing the Mistress of the Felt, the powerful eighth member of the crew. She was probably the most intimidating member too, not a lot of mobsters wanted to face her head on.

Not even Crimson wanted to face her head on without multiple backup plans. If he had plans now then it was probably a good idea to put them into action. He could only trust and hope that Crimson had a plan for her, and maybe for Hearts Boxcars because as much as he hated to admit it the fucker wasn't that easy to deal with on his own.

The current atmosphere was so thick and filled with tension that a weak man could practically suffocate. But no one in the hallway was any way weak, they were all formidable and very dangerous people and if one of them did suffocate then they'd be devoured alive- and with Hearts Boxcars here that could very much mean a literal way.

Unsurprisingly, it was Hearts Boxcars that moved first. He was never the most patient person, so he let out a guttural roar, charging on after getting out his signature polearm weapon. Dammek let out a curse and quickly jumped out of the way, Crimson mirroring his actions so Hearts Boxcars ran past them towards Snøwman.

Snøwman smiled sharply and condescendingly as her signature whip lashes out towards Hearts Boxcars and from there it's a violent pandemonium within the hall, bullets, whips, polearms- weapons being used to cause harm and to defend themselves- unfortunately both he and Crimson had to try and retreat from the hallway. Too restrictive to move in for fighting but naturally, Hearts Boxcars and Snøwman followed after them.

And despite it being clear that Hearts Boxcars and Snowman were still fighting each other *as well* as Crimson and Dammek, they were somewhat working together as they prevented them from going anywhere- at least Snowman was preventing them from going down to the lower floors.

They were forced to go upstairs.

*Towards the floor of the party .*

Crimson gritted his teeth at that and Dammek swore heavily.

This was not their night.

---

*Calliope stares up her ceiling, her eyes, a pretty shade of lime green however it was dulled by the lifeless look in them. Her body ached, her leg within a caste and a large bandage wrapped around her forearms.*

*She'd made a mistake through her training and she paid for it.*

*Though at least she was out of physical combat classes for now. Something that her brother would no doubt notice and be jealous of, even with the fact her leg was broken and that her other classes would intensify to make up for the fact she couldn't participate in physical combat.*

*But that won't be until tomorrow, she has the day free and...*

*She has no idea how to spend it.*

*These days were rare, and usually she managed in finding something to do but today... She couldn't distract herself today. The full brunt of her situation was bare to her and she didn't even bother with the delusion of being a normal girl.*

*She was the daughter of an evil man. The sister of a brother who semi-hated her. The hidden member of an infamous criminal syndicate being trained to participate it once 'it was time'. She had no other choice. Not even death.*

*Her usual attempts of distracting herself and pretending that wasn't the case wouldn't work today. So she doesn't even bother with it.*

*All she does, is stare at her bright green ceiling. She doesn't open one of her numerous journals, she doesn't read through the books she has already read countless of times, she doesn't even open her treasured laptop. She just... stays on her bed, careful of her broken leg and injuries while staring at her ceiling.*

*She doesn't know how much time passes. She could never keep track without the assistance of a clock, Caliborn was always better at her at that. He doesn't brag about it though, just as she doesn't brag over the fact she knows spatial coordinates better than him.*

*They don't antagonize each other over that.*

*Not over the numbers.*

*Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.*

*It's maddening to hear but Caliborn is tortured by the sounds so much more than her-*

*Ping*

*Calliope blinks, slowly lifting her head to look at her laptop which let out a ping.*

*Strange.*

*She was sure she muted her brother's pesterchum.*

*It couldn't be from the Doctor nor from Snowman, neither of them used pesterchum, preferring to send off one of the men or coming to talk personally instead of over the restricted internet.*

*Curious and cautiously, she goes over to her laptop.*

*...*

*Who was this?*

-- roboticAutomaton [RA] began pestering uranianUmbra [UU] --

RA: Hello.

*She frowns, she doesn't recognize this handle.*

*How did he get this handle?*

UU: salUtations?

UU: who might yoU be?

*Despite being suspicious, she was not her brother and kept herself polite.*

RA: A friend.

UU: a friend?

RA: Yes. A friend.

RA: At least that's what I hope to become with you.

*She should block him. Stop talking and get back on her bed, continue staring at her ceiling.*

*And yet.*

*She doesn't.*

*His name is Hal.*

*He has a brother named Qrow.*

*He's around thirteen years old, her age.*

*He introduces her to others and for once in a very long time she is happy.*

*And Hal is wonderful.*

*Unfortunately it wasn't meant to last forever and she found **out**.*

*She had to do something even if she was powerless-*



*She could do something. And hopefully it would work.*

*Hal was her first friend and she cherishes that. Cherish him.*

*And yet he will no doubt be her downfall.*

*Just as she will be his.*

*She just hopes that she can help him in the end and that her plan works.*

*She works on it meticulously and carefully, even when she's found out, she still works on it until it was time.*

*-- uranianUmbra [UU] began pestering roboticAutomaton [RA] --*

*UU: i am so sorry hal*

*UU: forgive me*

*RA: What?*

*RA: Callie what's going on?*

*-- uranianUmbra [UU] ceased pestering roboticAutomaton [RA] --*

*RA: Callie?*

*-- uranianUmbra [UU] sent file systemscriptconstructionload.cal --*

*RA: Callie what is this?*

*RA: I don't unde*

*RA: Program System Script Construction Load Commencing...*

*RA: Data Corruption--*

*RA: sYSt3MErr0R404*

*Calliope was so sorry.*

*But it was for the best.*

*“Did you really think you could do that young lady?”*

*Yes she could.*

“...”

*“I will let this slide just for once. If only to save time, we do not have much left of it after all and a punishment now would only delay it, something we can’t have...”*

*Just what she wanted.*

“...”

*“Go to your room and await further instructions.”*

*She was really sorry Hal, but this was for the best really. Even Caliborn would have agreed definitely said something.*

*“... Yes sir ...”*

*She wanted to be free and she wanted to help him.*

*Even if she had to do some bad things, she would have both.*

*Sorry Hal.  
Sorry Qrow.*

*It would be fine in the end.*

*She hoped.*

---

“Mother.” Rose says aloud and Qrow is thankful that he’s prepared himself for this moment.

The adults are behind him and he carefully keeps his face neutral as he can sense them behind him. Especially *him* . He can do this. He can do this. Just keep calm and unfortunately rely on the two clown brothers with him. Remember that his cat-sibling was up in the vents along with his best friend and they were watching him and probably supporting him to the best of his ability.

He could do this.

“Hello my darling daughter~!” A chipper but mature feminine voice sang out as Roxanne came over with her sister and the two Strider brothers. She looks beautiful, she and Rosaline both. Dressed in flowy but figure hugging dresses that matched and were colored grey with small eye-catching designs on each respective Lalonde, make-up not too heavy nor too light, absolutely perfect. “Roxy, Dirky, Johnny and Jadey, how are you all this lovely night?” She asks, bright pink eyes crinkling but no doubt they are as sharp and observant as her daughter and niece’s eyes. Rosaline smiles, if possible it’s even more benign and mystifying than Rose’s but then again she was the mother of Roxy. The Alpha Rose- not that they knew that of course.

Qrow could only listen with half an ear as he keeps his head steadily low, letting his bangs cover his eyes and glasses a bit as he subtly shuffles closer to Gamzee and Kurloz. They notice of course, and Gamzee, though he’s smiling, has an unreadable look in his deep purple eyes that makes Qrow want to rip them out.

*Don’t look at me like that. Don’t.* Qrow snarls in his head, and there must’ve been something in his eyes because instantly Gamzee smirks at him and he fumes inwardly. He’s calm though as the look disappears.

He’s calm.

Only for a moment and the calm *cracks* as Bro- *Dereck*’s voice, husky and deep, speaks out. “And who’s this lil’ man?”

It strikes him, the low voice of his-of the Strider brother. The feeling of electricity climbing up and down his spine and the instinctive feeling of *dread* in his stomach- He’s- *He’s fine* . This was fine. Totally fucking fine. Shut down Qrow. Clamp down. Use what *he* taught you and leave no cracks. Cracks meant weakness. *He shouldn’t have weaknesses* .

“A pleasure to see you all again, this is an acquaintance of mine. Theodore Gloryin, though he tends to favor Theo.” Kurloz says smoothly and Qrow bows his head, lifting his head afterwards and *looks at them* .

The four adults look taken aback. Qrow doesn't think on why they look surprised, or slightly disturbed. B- *Dereck* looks at him and he keeps the walls up. *No cracks. No cracks. Nocracksnocracks- n o c r a c k s-* "A pleasure to meet you Missus Lalondes and Messrs Striders." He says, voice steady and calm.

To him anyway.

He's *lifeless* to the others.

Kurloz and Gamzee keep a neutral face but they're frowning inwardly as the feathered hitman exuded not one emotion. Disturbingly empty.

The kids are surprised as well, looking at 'Theo Gloryin' with wide eyes. His voice was lacking life, a tone so monotonous it felt artificial.

The adults are *concerned* as they stare into his emotionless brown eyes. The spark of life was gone within his eyes, as if smothered to nothingness. His posture, stiff and tense but deceptively calm and steady.

Those eyes weren't the eyes of a child. They didn't belong to anyone who lived a good life.

D immediately promises to look into 'Theodore Gloryin'. This teen was someone who needed help, whether he knew it or not.

Rosaline's mind is flipping through all the psychological ramifications that 'Theo' had, ranging from possible PTSD and depression, dissociation- she shared a look with her sister, Roxanne's smile had slipped and now she wore a grimace on her lips, she mirrored her sister's expression.

Dereck... He looked at the teen's face, there's something *off* about him. Something just more than the concerningly emotionless look on his face. A familiarity that he's trying to remember and touch down, he... Dereck glanced at Dirk, then to D, then back to 'Theo'.

He's so close, it's at the top of his-

**BOOM**

The ground shook slightly as the faint sound of something *exploding* alerted everyone. Qrow, Kurloz and Gamzee's breaths hitched and Qrow immediately looked at the vents.

The *smoking* vents.

*Oh no.*

## **CRASH**

The vent grill cover was abruptly slammed off from the wall, startling *everyone* in the party. Black smoke spilled through the opening as a lithe figure escaped both the vent and the smog that came from it.

*It was Nepeta .*

She didn't cough, instead she screamed at everyone while raising a pistol into the air within her clawed hands. “ *EVERYONE ON THE GROUND!* ” She demanded then pulled the trigger of her pistol aimed at the ceiling.

## **BANG BANG BANG**

People screamed and most of the party attendees dropped to the ground, cowering as Nepeta- as *Huntress* bared her sharp teeth at them, looking threatening despite her size. “I said *on the ground now!* ” She ordered the rest of the ones who didn't drop down- which naturally included the Strilondes.

The moment Huntress had shown up and shouted for everyone to get on the ground, the two Makara brothers and single Davis were on the ground, on their knees and crouching low.

“Easy there, we're going on the ground.” D soothed as Huntress aimed her gun at the adult Strilondes, the kids had hesitantly crouched down when Rosaline motioned them to. Both adult women were crouched while D and Dereck were slowly crouching. “See, no need for the-” He said before being cut off as Dereck recklessly tried to tackle the lady hitwoman. “ *Dereck no!* ”

Tried being the keyword.

For all the skill that Dereck had in combat, it was nothing against the assassin that could bench press him three times over- but he didn't know that. All he knew was that one minute he was trying to tackle the dangerous lady with a gun, not recognizing her at first as she was covered in soot and smog ashes, and the next he was being flipped over the shoulder and thrown to the side- towards Dirk and the kids.

Dereck and Dirk cried out as Dirk tried to catch his big brother with semi-success, his brother weighed heavier than him and was no doubtedly bigger as well. Dirk went tumbling down but he also prevented his brother from landing on his head and breaking his neck.

"Nice try hero." Huntress said coldly, walking over towards him and heartlessly stepped on the older Strider's arm, "Next time *listen* to me *or else* ." It was fast. Faster than anyone could properly react to until the moment was done.

*Slash*

Dereck cried out as Huntress slashed his shoulder to his arm with her free hand, three slash mark created by her three main claws coming from her gloves bled which made Qrow's breath stutter before he forced himself to rationalize everything that Huntress was doing. The injury looked bad, but it actually wasn't that deep. It could be healed over the course of weeks and wouldn't risk his arms-

"You bitch!" Roxanne cried out, Rosaline and D holding her back as Huntress stepped away from Dereck and Dirk, leaving the younger brother to panic along with Rose, Roxy, Jade and John. Huntress aimed her pistol at the glaring Lalonde adult.

"Move and I do something worse than *scratch* him." She purrs, flicking the blood off of her claws. Qrow tries not to let the small blood splatter bother him.

It shouldn't bother him, she'd done it plenty of times before- *but never with Bro's blood* - no. This was fine. She knew what she was doing. She wasn't going to do anything worse. She wasn't going to kill him or the others she was- she was... What the fuck was she doing?

What is she thinking? Where was Chesire?

Qrow glanced at the still smoking vent and-

***BOOM***

Another explosion let off from somewhere undeniably close, it shook the room, and another vent started smoking. Huntress cursed and Qrow realized what was happening. He strained to listen and realized he could hear a slight hissing and banging coming from the vents.

Chesire was still in the vents.

In the exploding vents.

*Someone was bombing the vents and it forced Huntress out .*

---

"I hope he'll be okay." Nepeta murmured as she watched Qrow, Kurloz and Gamzee be cornered by both the Strilonde kids plus Egbert and Harley along with the Strilonde adults.

Chesire's lips pursed, which looked weird on their feline face. "... He won't but he'll manage." They murmur back, watching their brother 'manage' within the room. Oh how they wanted to help, to assure him that they were there and things were- relatively fine.

But communications were down and there was not much they could do about it. They couldn't get into contact with the others, and as much as they wanted to, they couldn't move from their post. They had to make sure things were going okay within the party. Make sure both Makaras and Qrow were okay within the party.

And it was clear that Qrow wasn't really okay.

But he'll manage.

He had to after all.

And Chesire hated that.

Still, they- *wait-*

Both cat and semi-human stiffened, Chesire's ears twitched, swerved and moved while Nepeta tensed readily.

*There was someone else in the vents .*

The sound of cloth shuffling against the metal walls of the vents, the slight banging as limbs made contact with the floor echoed slightly.

Chesire repressed a hiss and shared a look with *Huntress* , they'd go find them. Make contact first.

Huntress hesitated before nodding, watching the cat silently pad towards the source of the noise- the other intruder in the vents.

She pressed against the wall near the vent's grill, listening closely for sound before-

*Hisses.*

*Curses and attempted soothing.*

*A familiar voi-*

She knew that lightly high-pitched voice. Clubs Deuce? *Oh fuck-*

***BOOM***

The vents shook almost violently and filled with black smoke, Huntress gritted her teeth and got out a pistol from her sylladex- she had to *move* - the vents were compromised and as much as she wanted to assist Chesire.



By the sounds of things - *hissing, snarling, yowling, yelps of pain* - they got it covered.

She had to deal with the party though.

Time to be threatening.

She mustered her strength and *kicked* the vent grill, sending it flying and crashing away from the wall as she jumped out. She had to take control of the party while Chesire dealt with the Midnight Crew member in the vents.

“ *EVERYONE ON THE GROUND!* ”

This was only the beginning she just knew it.

---

## Chapter End Notes

WHOOOF.

Sorry it took so long!

Been procrastinating and somewhat busy but- here it is!

Man, I hope you guys enjoyed this!

And hopefully the next chapter to any story won't take like two months to make- I make no promises since I know I won't be able to keep them so...

Wish me luck!

Or pray for my death!

Same thing either way because honestly I don't mind!

At any rate, the Suits and Suites Arc will eventually end, it won't last until ten chapters I swear. Surprisingly this arc is fighting me even though I kind of have it planned out but hey, when is anything easy. When it comes to me and my stories- easy isn't much of an option most of the time hahaha.

Anyway, hope you guys enjoyed this, hope the next chapter of any story including this one won't take two months, and I'll see you all later ;]

# Suits and Suites (5)

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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The tension in the room was so thick that people could choke on it easily, maybe those with weak wills already did and fainted from both the tension and the violence that was shown to them in the short time that Huntress was shoved into the room via a bomb.

Not that the others knew of it, no, all they knew was that out of nowhere a figure covered in soot came out of the vents and started shooting the ceiling, demanding them to all stay down on the ground. She wasn't above hurting others, that was clear by the man's torn shoulder.

There weren't a lot of people who recognized their capricious captor's identity, but once the figure shook off most of the soot covering her and flicked off the blood from her claws- those that could recognize her identified her as the Huntress. An assassin from the criminal organization of the Shackled.

Of those who recognized her were the StriLonde adults, who were sweating and inwardly swearing. Though Dereck was sweating for mostly other reasons, the pain from his torn shoulder was hard to ignore at the start but even with that he tried to calm down his panicking brothers along with his friends.

Near them though, three young men stewed and tried to comprehend what the situation was with one of them making sure his disguise was still in place- his hands firmly keeping his hair down, the barest glints of blond shuffled from time to time. Thankfully no one noticed it, too busy with the currently dangerous situation that was happening right now; i.e. the hitwoman with sharp claws and a gun.

Qrow was wondering on what the fuck to do as Nepeta stood before him, wielding her claws now after putting the gun away. This situation was clearly going FUBAR and desperately he wanted to connect with his brother once more, was Hal okay? He had to be. Please let him be okay. The emotionless facade he had earlier on melted slightly as his worry for his brother heightened to its peak, not to mention Chesire who was stuck in the vents battling off whoever was in there that was setting off bombs. It was probably Clubs Duece, but that would also mean that the Midnight Crew was involved and that would be more than a fucking problem.

Slick was here and he'd be pissed to see him. After his stunt during the last time they had met, he was actually going to kill Qrow this time, no more holding back. Which he was fine with, he hated the fucking bastard and wouldn't mind to shove his sword, broken or otherwise, through the man's body and kill him. ~~Do the same thing his alternate did to his Bro.~~

However if they were to fight here, in front of the others and in front of the StriLondes- that couldn't happen. He was not letting them find out this side of him, even if he wasn't their Dave, they didn't deserve to be exposed to this side of the world. Not to the face, up and personal like this. And though Nepeta had injured Dereck, at least she hadn't killed anyone. Yet. No one important in the party at least.

Anyone else was free game he reminded himself, trying to stay afloat, but being so still on the ground was really ticking him off. Unable to communicate with his brother, with Chesire, with Huntress herself- he glanced at her, she's prowling around the room, posturing and distracting the masses but keeping a wary and alert guard up as the vents continued to shake and explode but the timing between them was differing and Qrow just know that Chesire was giving Clubs Deuce hell.

Qrow glances to the Makara brothers, and he sees their calm facade. They don't even bother to act scared, but they are giving the effort of acting wary- just like him. But he knows underneath that their engines are starting, warming up, the craving of the fight lies in their veins and they're already feeling the adrenaline of the future combat to come. Gamzee's tense as hell, Kurloz's hands keep clenching and both of their eyes are hidden underneath their wild bangs in an effort to hide the gleam in their gazes.

And Qrow hates the way that he can relate to them.

To an extent anyway.

He hates staying still and down like this, but unless Huntress can somehow clear the room or Qrow can escape the eyes of the others, he's going to have to stay this way.

Time to play a dangerous waiting game.

---

*Playing the waiting game was always a gamble.*

*A dangerous gamble that ranged from game to game depending on the rules and situation of it.*

*One must have patience, conviction and luck.*

*Those were only three of the other numerous things that were required to play the waiting game.*

*The most interesting ones were always the ones that had lives on the line.*

*“...”*

*My master plays the ultimate waiting game, and he has everything in his palms.*

*Well, almost everything.*

*There is always something that could go wrong during this game, and though my master is wary, he still plays the game with utmost confidence. Why should he not? He is determined, he is patient, he is lucky and so much more.*

*He can adapt to the game whenever it is necessary.*

*And when the game calls for new players, he chooses meticulously and forms plans for his new pawns.*

*The newest pawns are acting as expected, and it all according to both mine and my master's plans.*

*It is an honor to play in my master's stead, to host the game, he has no need to play directly yet. He is patient and he enjoys a show.*

*I shall provide him a show that will please him, and prove further what an excellent host I am to him.*

*And though there will be wild moves from a few certain pawns, like my master's dear daughter, I will try to mimic my master and adapt accordingly.*

*Who knows, her actions might just provide even more entertainment to my master.*

*Who am I to deny him his show?*

*It would make things so much more interesting in the long run, and I look forward to the duel that is now set in stone.*

*Though it is a shame, I spent so much time cultivating a wondrous scenario.*

*No matter, I shall adapt and construct an even more wondrous scenario. Host a game that would truly entertain my master.*

*It matters not if I lose one pawn or two, they are all my master's pawns in the end.*

*This makes no difference.*

*The clock is broken. The box is hidden. The families are in disarray. The brothers are together.*

*It is only a matter of time for it all to change.*

*All I have to do, is host the game, play it well, adapt to the rare but interesting moments of unexpectedness, cultivate and construct an*

*entertaining show for my master and wait.*

*Wait for the end.*

*Wait for the start.*

*Wait for everything.*

*And where is the gamble in this?*

*It is right there, right in front of everyone yet they do not see it.*

*The bet is set, the game is in play, and I host it all and stand in stead of my master, making moves on both his behalf and on my own.*

*He is pleased.*

*He is entertained.*

*He is in a good mood.*

*Wonderful.*

*As my master deserves, I shall do everything in my power for his benefit.*

*For his game, and so I too, shall play the waiting game and enjoy the show.*

*As the director, I should enjoy the show I created, yes?*

*Yes...*

*“ . . . ”*

*Of course master, please enjoy the show and thank you for this lovely opportunity.*



---

Dereck took in a deep breath, trying to keep calm and abate the pain that was coming from his slash wound. It was helping, what wasn't helping was his brother's quiet panic and concern over him. He was glad they were okay at least. And hey, he still had his arm, it all could've gone worse.

Hooray for optimism in such a pessimistic situation.

It was still very pessimistic however.

Here he was, leaning against D for support as Roxanne used a piece of Rosaline's dress to patch him up. It was a shame to ruin her lovely dress as such but Rosaline was stubborn in having Roxanne use a piece of her dress to cover and temporarily bandage his wound- her dress was long enough anyway, and even then, she wouldn't have cared if she showed more than a little leg.

The Lalondian sense of shame and modesty was weird, though it was a kind of weird that Dereck could relate to along with his brothers. Considering they were family and all- close cousins that grew up together.

At least Rosaline was showing how much she cared about Dereck, even at the cost of her beautiful and expensive dress. Dereck should fix that after this, maybe modify it.

That is, depending if they would even get out of this alive...

No, that's pessimistic thinking and Dereck was opting to be optimistic for the sake of his family. They *would* get out of this alive, he was going to make sure of it.

All of them, not just his family even though they were his priority. James would never forgive him if John got hurt here, nor would Jacob for Jade.

He had to keep calm and make sure they were all alright.

Thankfully they were all huddling in and he could keep an eye on them; the kids were fucking terrified out of their damn minds. Rose, Roxy and Dirk were hiding it well, but it was clear they were scared for the outcome and the possible bad ends they'd probably face. Not to mention Dirk was more than peeved at the fact that Huntress had hurt him.

Speaking of the assassin... Dereck's orange eyes peered at the pacing Huntress, prowling through the room and making growly threats and keeping an eye on them- why was she here? Was she alone? No, probably not. Dereck had no doubt that she could kick his fucking ass and do shit on his own, but this whole dangerous operation or whatever it was for her was orchestrated by someone else.



They were being held hostage, by a petite deadly woman who was one of the most dangerous people in the city. Though she was much smaller than he expected, he almost took her as a teenager- but no, that couldn't be. A teenager shouldn't live in such bloodshed. That was just, wrong. So very wrong. For a lot of reasons.

So for his sake of mind, he hoped that Huntress was just a petite short woman who was very fucking deadly.

Speaking of Huntress...

He glanced over to the dangerous assassin. The only reason he recognized her was from the police reports he may or may not have gotten in an arguably legal way. He had a friend in the department, she was the head of the investigation actually and he just wanted to know what to look out for so he asked for some reports about the somewhat known dangerous figures of the underworld.

The Huntress of the Shackled Sufferers were one of the most dangerous ones he'd read about, even if there wasn't that much about her personally- he's read and stomachached through the kill count and murders she had under her belt.

Huntress wasn't that big, but by no means did that mean she was weak. Those who underestimated her found themselves dead, sooner most of the time than later, later if she found them particularly annoying. Her size just added into her speed and even then, she was strong enough to throw grown men over her shoulder.

She dressed strangely, but compared to the Mirthful Church, a terrifying mob organization that dressed like fucking *clowns* - she was fairly normal. She wore a dark green jacket with a thick hood with two bumps on it, almost like cat ears, however one 'ear' had a large stitch-like design on it with two silver studs, and the other 'ear' had one long slash along the 'ear' along with something silver tucked into the ear between the slash. Maybe she was storing weapons in the ears? That was unconventional but also unexpected.

On her right arm, strapped to her bicep was a brown buckle that had two sharp knives attached, clearly not just for show. On her left wrist was a short brown leather armguard, it seemed thick, but not thick or heavy enough to impede her hand movement. She also had dark blue fingerless gloves, the knuckles had bumps, perfect use for punching- or slashing as those bumps also concealed the blades that were hidden within the gloves.

A part of Dereck wanted to know how the fuck that worked, but mostly he was wary of those gloves. Huntress had used those claw-gloves to slash him after all.

Her jacket buttoned to the side, and on the left side of her chest was the sign of the Shackled sufferers in grey- she must have changed her jacket, he idly remembered that the sign had been in the middle of her chest before but that hardly mattered.

Around her waist were two belts, one dark green and furry and the other was dark red and leathery, the dark red belt had pouches hanging at the side and was no doubt hiding other things in it as well. The green one didn't seem to be anything of use but who knows with the maniac. Black pants covered her legs along with calf length military-like boots.

Her face was covered by a mask that depicted two feline-like mouths, the top one snarling and the bottom smiling sharply.

Frankly in any other situation her clothes would seem cool or even much but in the current situation she was dressed to intimidate and she was succeeding. She was an overwhelming potentially fatal force that was not to be underestimated or messed with.

It was a miracle all she's done so far was hurt *him* and no one else.

Which made him question on what the fuck she wanted and who else was with her.

"You okay big bro?" Dirk questioned quietly as Roxanne finished the makeshift bandage on the slash wound. "How's it feeling?"

Dereck grunted, carefully moving his injured arm snorting when Roxanne gave him a warning look. "Feels fine." He replied, rolling his eyes when Dirk mirrored the look Roxanne previously gave him. "Okay so it still hurts but it's fine. Not that bad, at least it ain't exposed to the air anymore." He points out, the last thing he needed was to get an infection.

The wince and grimaces he got from them both made him nod, "Everyone else okay?" He questioned back even though he knew they were- scared shitless sure, but they were fine. He still wanted to know though.

"We're fine, D's sulking because he feels guilty about you getting hurt and sis is berating him for thinking like that." Roxanne answered, motioning to the quietly whispering blondes near them. Dereck sighed and shook his head, of course D would feel guilty. Stupid older brother...

Dereck turned to Dirk, Rose, Roxy, Jade and John, "You kids fairin' okay?" The kids took top priority.

Roxy sends him a thumbs up, making him smile slightly, "We're great. I want to punch that bitch's face but we're doing great."

"Roxy no!" Jade whisper yelled at her, looking concerned and scolding, "She's too dangerous, you saw what she did to Dereck- she could do that to you! Or worse!"

John nodded in agreement, "Yeah! Rox, no punching the scary green lady." He said with some humor, covering up his nervousness over the whole situation. Good, good, keep calm and do humor, keep them clear headed and not be controlled by fear.

"Who is she anyway?" Rose questions, warily glancing at the woman, wincing as she threw a man to the ground because he tried to subtly crawl away from the group to the exit. That was a stupidly risky move. But Huntress was definitely proving she was not to be messed with, clawing a guy was one thing but throwing a grown man twice her size on the floor like it was nothing?

Roxanne motioned the kids closer, not wanting them apart, by this time D and Rosaline was back into their conversation, “She’s Huntress. A hitwoman from the Shackled Sufferers.” Roxanne said quietly to them, grimacing as Huntress seemed to glance their way but continued to prowl around the room.

Dirk swore underneath his breath, “How dangerous is she?” Rose asks her mother, fists clenching in her lap.

Roxanne grimaces, “Very, she’s one of their best hitmen.” She answers her daughter, her niece’s breath hitched and went to hold Rose and John’s hands, finding comfort from the physical contact. They squeezed her hands, Jade even went to hold John’s other hand, wanting some physical comfort as well.

“What’s she doing here?” Dirk hissed quietly, eyeing Huntress as she circled around them all.

D shrugs helplessly, “I don’t know kid, I really don’t know. But we’re gonna be okay though alright kids? We’re gonna be fine.” He reassured them with a smile, ruffling Dirk’s hair making his little brother huff in irritation.

They were going to be fine.

At least that was what Dereck was hoping for.

Leaning against his brothers for support, he looked around the room and his eyes drifted to the Makara brothers and their ‘friend’.

Gamzee and Kurloz were keeping calm, staying down low and didn’t seem to be planning anything risky. Same with Theo who was curled behind Gamzee and Dereck thinks back to his eyes.

Those emotionless brown eyes, the kind that no kid should have. The spark of life smothered out, they were attached to a living human but they’d be more of a fit for a dead man. Dereck took in a calming breath, brows furrowing as he thought back to the meeting.

Theo seemed so familiar to him, had he met him before? It would have to be before he seemed so... lifeless. There was something about him that nagged a part of his brain, a sense of déjà vu almost. Despite it though, he hoped the kid was alright. D would no doubt ask him to look into Theo Gloryin, and he definitely would. Didn't matter if he met the kid before or not, helping him was the right thing to do for someone who bore that empty gaze.

Still, he was unbearably familiar and Dereck wanted to know why. Though it was hard enough to keep calm and think properly with his arm slashed, his family and friends in danger and a dangerous hitwoman skulking around the room, making threats, displaying her power and dominance and holding them all hostage.

Dereck had to admit though, this was one hell of a charity event he was in. Out of everything that could have happened, he certainly hadn't expected this happening tonight.

***BANG***

*Oh great what now?* Dereck questioned internally as the door to the room was broken into, only to tense up when he saw the culprit.

***Oh fuck.***

"Well, well, well, if it ain't the little kitty of the Silver Shitheads." The culprit drawled with his rough gravelly voice, ambling in casually as if he hadn't just broken down a heavy door, behind him another man sighed. "Where's your usual partner featherfucker?" Spades Slick questions the stiff hitwoman who stood in the middle of the room.

Diamonds Droog pinched the bridge of his nose but shook his head in exasperation, "Let's just get this over with- everybody out. I'd rather avoid unnecessary bloodshed." He calls out to the room, looking over to the cowering hostages of the room.

They hesitated, but Huntress spoke up with a gruff dark tone, "You heard him, everyone get the fuck out." She says aloud, crossing her arms

impatiently as another explosion goes in the vent.

Dereck had no idea what the fuck was going on, but if there really was a chance for them to leave he was so going to have his cluster of family and friends out of this dumpster fire of a situation.

From his place beside the Makaras, 'Theodore Gloryin' went taut, his fists clenched. Gamzee's grin grew while Kurloz smiled slightly.

Looks like the waiting game was almost over.

---

Fighting in a restricted and finitely spaced area was always annoying.

Fighting in a restricted, finitely spaced and elevating area? Even worse.

Case in point; fighting on the stairwell was a pain in the ass if you didn't have the proper weapons and the stamina to handle the continuous climb on the staircase.

Crimson gave a wordless snarl as he ducked underneath the lashing whip that collided against the wall with a sharp crackling ' *thwip* ', he pulls Tetrarch down with him so he can dodge Boxcars' attack- which was throwing a damn *TV antenna* like a fucking javelin.

The antenna buries itself into the wall behind them, "Drats!" Boxcars scowls and shields himself Snowman's whip with his burly and protected arms. He still hissed as a lash of the whip slips by his defense and leaves a thin red line on his face.

Tetrarch's teeth gritted together as he and Crimson were forced to climb another set of stairs without any other choice. They really were being forced up towards the floor of the party, they had no idea was going on; both on why the fuck they were trying to get them up to the party and what was going on at said party.

"After this I swear I'm going to take a fucking break!" Tetrarch barked at Crimson, hauling him up so his young leader could avoid *another* TV

antenna javelin attempt- how many did that giant have?! Why *TV antennas*?!

Crimson grunted, “Feel free to take Xefros with you.” He gruffs, sending a new stream of explosive bullets towards the two behind them.

Unknown to them, a certain pair were climbing the stairs and following steadily.

All according to plan.

---

Huntress prowled the floor, stalking through the helpless weak prey that consisted of the rich and famous. The predatory side of her was purring as she established dominance, said side was influencing her way of thinking again but that didn’t really matter right now, however she still had the state of mind to hold back from doing anything more than throw men on the ground when they tried anything suspicious, the women she shoved and the teens and children she glared at.

They were lucky it was her doing this, she at least was restraining herself and limiting to just throwing people around and just being the predator she naturally was. If Qrow was in her place, he’d end up knocking people out or cause more harm than good.

Speaking of Qrow... She looked around with the pretense of looking intimidating and looking over the herd of prey that were cowering underneath her dangerous power, but in truth she was looking over to Qrow and the Makara brothers. They were doing the good effort of seeming like they were cowering, but in reality they were aching to join her, to stand and get ready for the imminent fight.

But for the moment, they were disguised and had to act like prey instead of the predators they were.

However, they’d get to be predators soon enough, she could feel it...

**BANG**

And there it was.

The door was broken into, and from there, Spades Slick and Diamonds Droog came in. A jolt of adrenaline shot through her spine as he spoke, “Well, well, well, if it ain’t the little kitty of the Silver Shitheads.” He drawled, making her lowkey snarl. “Where’s your usual partner featherfucker?” She was so looking forward to tearing into him, Qrow wouldn’t mind.

She could already see Qrow tensing up on the floor with Gamzee and Kurloz. She could see Diamonds Droog pinch the bridge of his nose then shake his head in exasperation, “Let’s just get this over with- everybody out. I’d rather avoid unnecessary bloodshed.” He calls out to the room, looking over to the cowering hostages of the room.

Right, they didn’t need the prey around them to die unnecessarily.

Huntress could see the prey looking at her with wide eyes, and she crosses her arms impatiently, “You heard him, get the fuck out.” They needed to clear out so Qrow, Gamzee and Kurloz could join her side. Become the predators she knew and semi-loved, she didn’t care about Gamzee and Kurloz, but Qrow? He was part of her pride. Part of her family. He was someone she cared about and respected alongside her older brother Crimson.

From there, the prey she kept ‘hostage’ fled the scene. Fleeing out the broken door.

The Strilonde pride- *family* were clearly hesitant, but a low snarl aimed at them had them standing, the adults of the group holding on to each other and the younger cubs. They were about to pass Qrow and the Makaras when they stopped.

“Come on, we should go.” The eldest Strider, D, told the Makara brothers and Qrow, trying to look out for them. Which was nice of him... but also a hindrance really.



Fortunately, or unfortunately depending on how you look at it, Slick interrupted before they could reply, "Move it blondie!" Slick snarled, then he recognized him. "Well if it ain't the Strider 'n Lalonde guys, there's a bounty on y'er head, pays fucking ridiculous just for *one* of you. But here you all are, ripe for the pickin'." He chuckled darkly, clearly enjoying the look of terror on the cubs and the tense rigidness the adults had.

She snarled, they were under their protection! "*Leave* ." She growls at the StriLondes plus two pride, "Your focus shouldn't be on them Spades." She took his attention, motioning the others to leave.

They were obviously hesitating, unsure on how safe their attempt to leave would be.

Slick glanced at her, sneering, "Oh, but it should shouldn't it? Unless your partner's here for me to stab." He shoots back, knife appearing in his hand from his sylladex. "Where is the fucker anyway? Got plenty of 'catching up' with him to do... Well, I'd understand why he wouldn't be here, not with *them* here." He motions to the StriLondes who looked confused.

"Kid's still avoidin' these shitheads yeah? Tough, but hey, if he's not here then all the money goes to the Midnight Crew when we cash in their heads." Slick laughs, ignoring Droog's warning look.

Qrow was finally standing, both Makara brothers standing with him and Huntress saw the look of utter *contempt* in his disguised eyes. He always did hate Slick. "Heel boy." He says coldly, and quietly, but it was loud enough for Slick who was unfortunately close enough to hear it as well.

Before anyone else could react, Qrow was sent flying from a punch to the face from Spades.

And from there it was a matter of movement.

Droogs immediately equipped his main weapon- a fucking *questick* and whacks at the StriLondes out the broken door. "Time for you to leave." He tells them while Huntress roars, pouncing on Slick who growls and dodges

her pounce. The broken doorway gets blocked by a giant slab of stone from Droog's sylladex.

From there it was just them now.

Qrow's disguise was broken the moment Spades Slick punched him, his disguising glasses flew off of his face, letting his blonde hair and red eyes be revealed to the world. It was unsure if the StriLondes saw it when he was sent flying, but that wasn't what mattered now.

There was no one else in the room now.

Which meant Qrow, Gamzee and Kurloz could finally let loose.

Gamzee cackled as Spades Slick stepped back towards Diamonds Droog, his eyes dilated and gleamed, Kurloz shook his head and smiled, a chuckle in his throat as he tugged at his cuffs. Huntress helped Qrow up who no doubt have a bruise on his face from the force of Spade's punch.

But that didn't matter, Qrow's eyes stared at Spades Slick, he'd return the favor soon enough. Behind him, Huntress' pupils slitted and she rose a ready fist.

"Finally!" Gamzee exclaimed, shedding his polite and proper facade for the violent insanity that was underneath, a giant grin on his face.

"Let the party fucking begin!"



---

## Chapter End Notes

Here's the chapter! Sorry it took so long but as usual, procrastination and motivation was a problem along with other things. Hope you guys enjoy it! Also! There's panels! Drawings! That's gotta make up for it right?

If not, well... here's a picture of Nepeta! As the Huntress!



I actually went to try and do her design! I'm kind of satisfied on what I ended up with, but yes, this is the Shackled Sufferer's Huntress! Hope you enjoy guys, hopefully next chapter will come sooner. Also yes, the action will come next chapter :]

Works inspired by this one [Clowns, Dogs, Mutants, oh my!](#) by  
[orphan account](#)

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enjoyed their work!